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# DEFENCE

OF A

## VINDICATION

OF

*The Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. FOSTER'S ACCOUNT  
of the late Earl of Kilmarnock :*

IN REPLY TO

*The Rev. Mr. SAMUEL WILSON'S REMARKS  
on the said VINDICATION :*

Wherein is Exhibited

A NEW HYPOTHESIS,

With a View to clear some Important Difficulties.

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*Addressed to Protestants of all Denominations,  
more especially the CALVINISTS.*

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*By RICHARD FINCH, Author of The Vindication.*

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L O N D O N :

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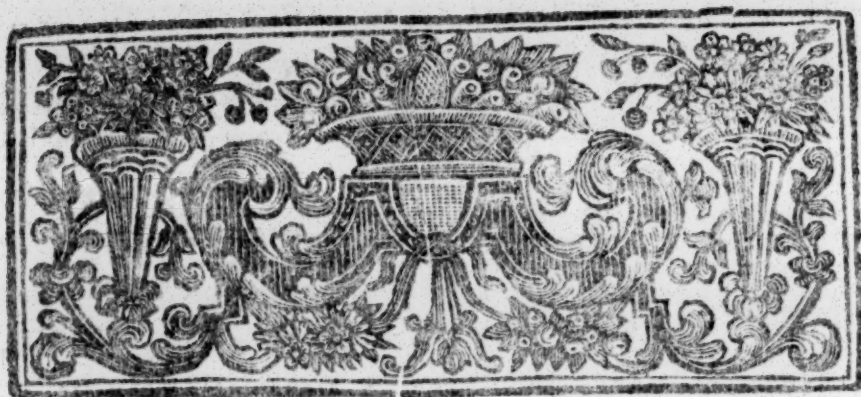
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DEFENCE

VINDICATION







A  
D E F E N C E  
O F T H E  
V I N D I C A T I O N

Of the Reverend

*Mr. FOSTER's Account, &c.*

**I** ALLOW there is a *Decency* in Writing to be observed by every *Author*; and would this have procured an Answer to a *certain Book* wrote some Time since, the *Vindication* of *Mr. Foster* had, perhaps, never appeared, or the Expressions might have been a little more *mitigated*. How far *Mr. Wilson* has exceeded the *Vindication*, in conforming to this Rule of Decency in Writing, is not for me to determine: Tho', I think, it is not altogether can-

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did to make an Extract, and lump the most warm and *virulent* Expressions together, as he has done in his first Page; because it tends to furnish the Reader with a more *disagreeable Idea* of the Writer, than he might otherwise have conceived from reading the Expressions, where they stand *connected* with their Subject, which better illustrates their Reason and Fitness.

Some Persons have already set me down for a *profane Person*, a *Deist*, and a *Blasphemer*: Yet I strongly suspect, that future Generations, when I am reposed in Dust, will be as much amazed that Men, of the most finished Learning and Abilities, ever could give into such a strange System of Doctrines, as I am *now* wondered at, and opposed, for contradicting.

No Stratagem of *Antichrist*, or Mistake of the Mind, has, perhaps, been more fatal to the Cause of Truth and Virtue, than drawing Men of the *best* Morals and *brightest* Abilities to espouse and vindicate bad Principles: Their Writings give their Principles great Advantage; and their Examples have the same undesirable Tendency.

The Reverend Mr. *Pickering*, whom I have sometimes been ready to compare to *the Seraph Abdiel in Milton*, may, notwithstanding, be of great Service, to lick some few of those *Zealots*, who have been steeped in *Gall* and *Vinegar* from their Cradles, into better Shape and Temper; and teach them, after his *amiable* and *persuasive* Manner, to look, for the future,

on

on Men of contrary Principles with a little more Humanity and Tendernefs, and *much lefs* Abhorrence, than they would do on a Dæmon incarnate.

I am fo far from being a *Deift*, much lefs a *Blasphemer*, that I freely submit the Difpute in hand to be determined by *Bible Authority*, RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD. I have, indeed, charged the *Faith Men* with being fuperftitious: Not that I exclude a rational Faith; but, certainly, *mere* Faith, or *Opinion*, where it is *extravagant*, *ungrounded* and *unfcriptural*; where it leads Men to *undue* and *irrational* Dependencies, muft needs be Superftition. How far I *have*, or *fhall*, fucceed in Proof of this Charge, the Reader will judge.

This *Preliminary* being adjusted, and the Authority of *Scripture* agreed to, I beg Leave, before I enter on the Argument, to lay down fome general *Rules*, or *Observations*, to guard Chriftians againft the Mifinterpretation of *Scripture*. It is a moft certain and indisputable Maxim, That every thing which *God* reveals muft be true: Yet we ought conftantly to be on our Guard, that we do not to *underftand* Revelation, as to *subvert* and *destroy* the Foundation whereon our Faith in Divine Revelation is built, viz. the *Truth* and *Authority* of the Revealer; for this Obedience to Revelation ftands on our *previous* Knowledge and Ideas of the Divine Being, from whose adorable Perfections we *infer*, with the greateft Certainty, the *Truth* and Authority of all his



Revelations. Our Knowledge, therefore, of what is Justice, Truth and Goodness in *Deity*, is not only prior to this Conclusion, we draw concerning Revelation, but the very *Source* and *Foundation* of the Inference, which is not in itself clear and indubitable, beyond the Clearness of our Knowledge of God's Attributes and Perfections.

This, then, being the Source and Cause of our so judging, in respect to Divine Revelation, it must absolutely and indisputably follow, that *no Doctrines*, palpably clashing with these *prior* Ideas and Knowledge, *can possibly* be of *Divine Extract*, or ought ever to be admitted, in Obedience to the Letter, or *seeming Letter* of the *Bible*; for should we admit the Method which our Adversaries sometimes take, in their Interpretations of Scripture, an *Obscurity*, if not an absolute *Subversion*, of our prior Knowledge of the Almighty, from which *all rational Assent* to his Revelations can *only* arise, will also immediately *take place*: And he that will not be governed by *this Rule*, pulls down with *one Hand*, what he establishes with *the other*, sets God and his Revelations in *impious Contrast*, and makes a mere *Bauble* and *Play-thing* of the *Bible*.

The Certainty, therefore, of the Sense or Meaning of any external Revelation, can *never hang in even Poise*, or be allowed to ballance against, much less to contradict our *first* and primary Ideas of *Divine Rectitude*. As all Divine Revelations derive their true Worth and  
 Certainty

Certainty from hence, this is an *infallible Standard* to try the Truth of a pretended Revelation by; at least *so far*, as to reject every thing which we clearly discern to be opposite and contradictory to this perfect and invariable Rule. No Text, therefore, of the Bible, is to be believed, in a Sense subversive of this Rule: And what pity is it, that Men of Learning and Understanding should employ both, to invent *Sophisms*, and find out *Subterfuges* to support a favourite Scheme, tho' they are all the while dishonouring the Divine Being, and bringing some awful and venerable Truths into Contempt and Disesteem of some unthinking Persons; when a *tenth Part* of the Pains which they bestow, to warp the *plain Texts* of the Bible (which are against them) into a rigid and blasphemous Meaning, would be able to settle those *few* and *obscure* ones (on which they depend) in a Sense that God's Glory, and our own proper Happiness and Security, manifestly call for, and loudly demand! And without the foregoing Rule of *Interpretation* be admitted, *all Religion* is a mere *Dream*, and the Bible only a Nose of Wax, suited to every *silly* or *impious* Impression. And tho' the Current of Scripture be, as I think, against my Opponents, yet it will be as much in vain to pursue some Persons, who hold the Doctrines of *Faith* and *Election*, from Scripture to Scripture, as to hunt Serpents and wild Beasts in a Wilderness: You no sooner drive them out of one Hole, but they shoot instantly into another; and the



Toil is endless and fruitless. Let me, therefore, earnestly intreat, and beseech all Persons to have due Regard to this Rule of Interpretation.

It is observed by Mr. *Wilson*, (*Remarks*, P. 2.) That, in respect to Mr. *Foster*, *the Fact stands thus*—"Mr. *Foster*, in his serious Discourses with a *Nobleman* under Sentence of Death, is wholly silent as to *Jesus* the great Redeemer, &c." Page 3. "This gave great, and, perhaps, very just Offence to all the Friends of the Mediator." And again, "That you admit the Charge, and allow Mr. *Foster* is not misrepresented."

In respect to Mr. *Foster*, tho' I esteem him deserving of the highest Encomiums, and his Account of the late *Earl of Kilmarnock* not only easily defensible, but in itself accurate and admirable; yet, the judicious Reader will soon perceive that something more than merely a Defence of Mr. *Foster*, was from the first intended, in writing the *Vindication*: And further Reasons will, I hope, hereafter appear to favour the Undertaking. But, in Justification of Mr. *Foster*, it is probable that he and the late *Earl* were well acquainted: That Mr. *Foster's* Sentiments on the Doctrine of an Atonement, were well known, and approved by that Nobleman; for it does not appear by Mr. *Foster's* Account, that the *Earl* seemed at all to give into Mr. *Wilson's* Sentiments of this Matter, or so much as mentioned the Doctrine during his Confinement, under Sentence of Death: And, therefore, as that Lord knew  
Mr.



Mr. *Foster's* Sentiments, and concurred with *him* in *them*, there could be little Occasion for Mr. *Foster*, in his Process with the *Earl*, to trouble *him* with an exact Account of the *Person*, *Mission*, and Importance of *Christ*: Besides, he might, after St. *Paul's* noble and laudable *Example*, tenderly avoid giving Offence to *weak Brethren*, who would have been much more disgusted at an *open Denial* of their Doctrine, than an *intire Silence* about it. But how does it appear, that Mr. *Foster* is *wholly silent* as to *Jesus the great Redeemer*, when, in the strongest Terms, he inculcates on his Lordship's Mind, that Sin is an *Affront to God's supreme Authority*, a *Contempt of all his Promises of Mercy*.\* Does not this include a *suitable Reverence* to the great and gracious Law, or Rule of the *Gospel*, brought down from Heaven; and to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the great Dispenser of this Law? Does not Mr. *Foster*, when about to administer the Sacrament, tell the *Earl*, that the Death of *Christ* was a *solemn Ratification of God's Covenant of Mercy to unfeigned humble Penitents*? † This, surely, is *far from overlooking the Redeemer*, or treating his Blood with Contempt or Ingratitude. So that, I think, Mr. *Foster* has been *much misrepresented*; tho' to say he did not refer his Lordship to an *absolute Dependance* on the *mere Merits of Christ*, is no Misrepresentation of Mr. *Foster*: But some Christians considering his Behaviour towards that Nobleman as *Pa-*

\* Mr. *Foster's* Account, page 13.

† Page 16.

*ganish, Heathenish, and Antichristian, was, I think, a Misrepresentation both of Mr. Foster and of the Doctrine of Christianity. Wherein, then, do I allow the Charge? Is there no Medium between being wholly silent as to Jesus the great Redeemer, and referring a Sinner to an absolute and implicit Reliance on his Blood and Atonement? Certainly the Medium is obvious and apparent to all, who are disposed to look with a candid Eye on the Conduct of Mr. Foster.*

*Remarks, P. 4. Mr. Wilson observes, "What Mr. Foster may have felt from the Children of superstitious Faith, I know not; and the Suggestion might as well have been spared, as no Instance is produced."*

*Mr. Foster has been treated, from the Pulpit, as a mere Moralist, if not a Pagan or Heathen: And in private Conversation he has, in my Hearing, been inveighed against, for what some deem Looseness of Principle, with an Indignation and Bitterness of Spirit, neither reconcileable with a Christian Meekness and Temper, or fit to be invested with a temporal Authority, over the Person and Substance of a Man they so sincerely hate, only because he cannot, in good Conscience, subscribe to what both he and myself esteem to be the Doctrines of superstitious Faith.*

*We come, in the next Place, Page 6. to the main Argument. "The Necessity and Importance of Repentance is (says Mr. Wilson) readily granted; but the Question is, whether*



“ whether these are our *justifying Righteous-*  
 “ *ness*, in the Sight of God.—Not Mr. Pic-  
 “ *kering* only, but the God of Truth, has  
 “ told us, “ *By the Deeds of the Law no Flesh*  
 “ *shall be justified in his Sight; and that we are*  
 “ *saved not by Works of Righteousness, but ac-*  
 “ *cording to his Mercy.*”

I had alledged, *Vindication*, Page 6. That  
 God who made, governs, and possesses all, must  
 surely have a Right, a sovereign Right, to for-  
 give our Transgressions, on the Terms of Repent-  
 ance and Amendment only. Mr. Wilson answers,  
 “ Here, again, you are beside the Question;  
 “ the Enquiry is not about *Right*, but *Fact*;  
 “ and, I hope, you will let the great God  
 “ speak for himself: He tells us, that he made  
 “ his Son to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin,  
 “ that we might become the Righteousness of  
 “ God in him [with more of the like Sort]:  
 “ Nor is there the least Hint of Repentance  
 “ and Amendment to be joined with this Sa-  
 “ crifice, for our Justification, or as *giving*  
 “ Merit and Efficacy to the Atonement.”

These latter Expressions rather shew a Zeal  
 to support, at *all Events*, a favourite Cause,  
 than the least Shadow of an Argument. Are  
 not Repentance and Amendment frequently  
 urged and insisted on, when Christ's Death is  
 not so much as mentioned? And is his Death  
 therefore excluded, as bearing no Part in Man's  
 Salvation? Again, if the Dispute is not about  
*Right*, but *Fact*, another main Point is given  
 up.



*up.* I thought this Right of *Deity*, to forgive the Sinner, on the Terms of Repentance and Amendment *only*, had always been denied, as not consistent with Justice; and that the Suffering of Christ was an Expedient devised to satisfy Divine Justice: And wherein, on any Principle but a Demand of Justice, *could* what Mr. *Wilson* calls Fact, have been preferred to the Exercise of the *Sovereign Pleasure*, in the Pardon of our Sins on the Terms of Repentance and Amendment only? This, then, is giving up one grand Article of their Faith. And, in respect to the Texts quoted, tho' all of them ascribe *something* to the Merits of Christ's Death, yet none of them ascribe thereto the *whole* of Man's Salvation, in Exclusion of Repentance and Amendment, as being, in *no Part*, the Causes of procuring our Happiness. And as to those Expressions, *By the Deeds of the Law shall no Flesh be justified*, it is certain, that so far as *that Law* went, and Obedience duly accompanied it, it was *possible* to attain to Justification: If any thing further was required, the same Wisdom and Goodness exercised in dispensing *that Law*, and requiring Obedience thereto, suited to the Knowledge and Capacity of the Subjects of that Law, must certainly make the *same righteous Allowances*, in regard to any superior Requisition. Is not this self-evident?

But now to the Point of Repentance and Amendment, in *Opposition*, tho' not in *direct Denial*

*Denial of all Benefit, by the Sufferings of Christ.*—Mr. *Pickering*, who has largely entered into the Doctrine of Repentance and Amendment, will please to observe, that their Notions of an infinite Atonement, *cannot stand but on the Doctrine of distinct Divine Persons in the Trinity*; *one* infinite Person to make a Demand, and then *another* to satisfy this Demand: For *which Reason*, I found it necessary to expose and confute the common Doctrine of a Trinity of Persons. If I have done this, the other drops of Course; and Mr. *Pickering's* Sermon will amount to no more than an Attempt to raise a *Superstructure* without a Foundation, which some Writers would call *Building Castles in the Air*.

I agree with him, That one *Attribute* or Perfection of *Deity* is not to be *admitted*, or *understood*, in a Sense that is contradictory to another; and that we should be cautious how we speak concerning the *Person* and *Office* of the *Redeemer* of the *World*. There is, doubtless, among the Divine Perfections, a perfect and unchangeable Harmony; and, in regard to Christ, he is the Saviour of the World, in a *Sense* that is consistent with the Honour and Majesty of the *Father Almighty*: He, therefore, who, out of a conscientious Motive, is afraid to *exalt the Son*, in Diminution of, and *into the Place of the Father*, may stand hereafter, with great Safety and Security, before the Judgment-Seat of Christ; a Tribunal too righteous and equitable (supposing the worst)

to



to punish Man for Mistakes arising from such pious and rational Motives.

Surely, if there be such a Thing as *Prerogative* and *Sovereignty* in Deity, and he is also a good Being, a *repentant penitent* Creature MUST, I think, be a fit and deserving Object of the Display of this Power and Privilege, without the Intervention of a *Sacrifice*: And the Coming and Suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, ought *chiefly* to be regarded as a gracious Display, and kind Declaration, that God was ready to receive Man to *fresh Favour*, on THOSE DESPISED TERMS; And as to the Merit of Christ's Death, *as freely offering himself to die for Man*, the *whole* Merit can never lie here, without robbing the Father of *his Glory*, to give it to the *Son*. The Death of Christ can, *at most*, only add to the Father's Kindness to Man. Let them shew, how this *Restraint* of the Divine Sovereignty, to make way for *Divine Justice*, agrees with the extravagant Latitude they give to Sovereignty in another Case, *viz.* the *Doctrines of unconditional, eternal Election and Reprobation*.

These Gentlemen, in support of their various Doctrines, deal very freely with their Creator, *diminishing* and *exaggerating* his Attributes according to the *Purpose* they have in View, or the *Doctrine* they are defending.

If Sin be infinite, because committed against an infinite God, why may not our Repentance and Penitence be deemed so too, as they consist in humble Acknowledgments, and suitable



able Returns MADE to this infinite Being. If it be his Nature offended against, which constitutes the Infinity of the Sin, why may not his Nature have the same Effect, in respect to the Acknowledgments *made to him?*

But let us hear how Mr. *Pickering* and Mr. *Wilson* answer the Arguments I brought against the Justice and Equity of an absolute Atonement by Christ's Death, *viz.* that it was *punishing the Innocent instead of the Guilty*: Why, it seems *God did not exact* this Satisfaction from Christ, but *Christ made a voluntary Offer of his Blood*. Let us stop a little, in order to illustrate this Matter by a Simile. Suppose I have a large Demand on a poor indigent Wretch, beyond his Ability to satisfy, I nevertheless, under a Pretence of strict Justice, insist on my Debt, in the hearing of several Persons, among whom there is *but one*, that has Ability to satisfy it: I *beforehand know this*; and that the Humanity of his Temper will prompt him to offer it: This, tho' it be not an immediate, is certainly an *indirect Demand*, made on that Person. And how much more noble and generous would it be, to *remit entirely*, on proper Supplication, such a Debt as this, especially when the Payment of it could be of *no real Service* to the Creditor? I leave the Application to be made by Mr. *Pickering* and Mr. *Wilson*.

Mr. *Pickering's* next Argument was, and Mr. *Wilson* reasons much in the same Strain, *That tho' the Person of Christ be innocent, and it would*

would be unjust for him to suffer on that Account; yet he may justly suffer in his representative Capacity; and that God, as a just Being, must punish the Guilt, tho' the Sinner escape.

It seems then, according to this Doctrine; the Matter is compounded without punishing the Guilty, tho', according to the Notions of these Gentlemen, we should imagine the *Guilty only* could be punished. Is not the Threatning and Destruction to the *Sinner only*? How then, if another suffer in his Stead, is the *Divine Veracity* to be supported? But let us enquire, *whom* does their Doctrine punish? It should be only the Guilty, and yet *it is neither the Innocent nor the Guilty*, but a *middle Phantom* of the Imagination, called a *Representative*. To impose here an absolute Restraint on the Muscles of the Face, would really be too severe. Forgive me when I say, I cannot perceive the *common Sense*, much less the *Divinity* of this Doctrine. Can it be Sense to talk of punishing the *Guilt*? To punish *for* the Guilt is indeed common Sense; and that will lead us directly to the *Object* of Punishment, *viz.* the *Guilty*; and this Punishment God has a Sovereign Right to mitigate as he pleases. It is plain, from *their Doctrine*, that Christ is considered as *guilty in one Way*, and suffers in *another* wherein he is innocent: 'Tis his *Representativeship* that is deemed guilty; but his Person, which is allowed to be innocent, suffers. And therefore, to consider Christ under the Character of a Representative, will never reconcile the

the Affair to our *common*, tho' *true* Ideas of Justice. All such little Inventions, and Distinctions, without Differences, tho' they may be, and are the common *Resources* and *Subterfuges* of mistaken, or designing Men, who undertake to prop and support a feeble and tottering System: *Truth* stands not in need of such little *despicable* Arts. That Christ was innocent, and that this Doctrine makes him suffer as guilty, is undeniably evident: Instead of *making* up the Breach, it makes it *wider*; and instead of removing our Charge of Injustice, fixes it yet deeper in the Doctrine. And this, doubtless, is one of *Solomon's crooked Things*, which the greatest Wit, Logick, and Sophistry, and deepest Knowledge in Metaphysics, *will never be able to set streight*.

Is there any thing in the *Universe* so unreasonable, or romantic, as not to be accounted for by *such a Liberty of Invention*? Surely by this Method *any thing* may be made to signify *every thing*. Let us try, in the Case of Transubstantiation: This is, doubtless, a Contradiction, and a Lye to the Senses, but yet it is received as a Truth, on the Principle of Faith, above taking the Advice and Assistance of Reason. It is possible with God, but impossible with Men. But then observe, it is not, as *true Mystery* always *is*, and *must be*, above, but *contrary* to Reason. So in the Case of an absolute Atonement, it is a Contradiction on the moral Attributes of God, that the Innocent should, by his Appointment, suffer for the Guilty; yet  
Faith



Faith can receive it. Again, let me ask, *How could Mercy be shewn, if full Satisfaction was made?* Was not the *Debt* transferred, and the *Obligation* too? Suppose a *Creditor* will not release his *Debtor* till full Satisfaction be made, till *he*, or *another* for him, pay the Debt; and that other Person is so kind as to do it: To whom is the Debtor obliged, or *by whom* is the Bounty extended? Sure I need not make the Application. Is it not evidently the same in the Case of Christ's suffering for Sin? Again, if Justice in the Satisfaction be fully satisfied, *why do they talk of Mercy*, when there is nothing left for Mercy to do? Is not their God of Justice, a God without Mercy, as much as Dr. Young's *God of all Mercy is a God unjust?* Justice being fully satisfied, has removed or extinguished the Object of Mercy: On this Principle, therefore, the Divine Mercy is inactive, and must ever remain dormant. If one of Mr. Pickering's Servants had offended him, would he permit *another* that was innocent, to suffer in his Stead, and prefer *this Satisfaction*, under the Notion of a *Representative*, to a sincere and penitent Acknowledgement and Amendment, from the *Offender*? It would certainly be *more noble*, and *Godlike*, to forgive on the latter Conditions. Has not the *Divine Being* made it our Duty to forgive each other?

Mr. Pickering observed, That if, by the Charge of preaching up the Merits of CHRIST ABSOLUTELY

LUTELY and IMPLICITLY, *in the stead of Repentance and Amendment, be meant to exclude absolutely Repentance and Amendment, 'tis a vile Accusation.* To which I reply—The Charge was *not* intended in that *Sense*; for I am sensible they preach up both: But, it is to be feared, their *other essential Doctrines* will lead us *so to explain* what is meant by Repentance and Amendment, that they might as well *forbear* ever to preach them at all.

The Gospel, indeed, in many Places, and with the greatest Earnestness, insists on *both* Repentance and Amendment, as the *best* rational and effectual Means to obtain that Forgiveness and Mercy at the Divine Hand, which is held out to Mankind *chiefly on these Terms.* There is nothing said about the *Blood of Christ*, on the *one* hand, which does not ultimately resolve itself into the Sovereign Mercy of God; nor any thing taught on the other, concerning any Man's Claim to this Mercy, without Repentance and Amendment. Their principal Doctrines *cramp*, if not intirely *dissolve*, the *very best Foundations, Principles, and Basis* of all true Piety, *viz. the Fear of God, as a Punisher of Man's Actions hereafter.*

These Men are sure of an unconditional Salvation; to which it is, in their Notion, little better than *Blasphemy*, to annex the Necessity of good Works, as a *Part of their justifying Righteousness.*

An Enquiry into the Nature of Repentance and Amendment, may enable us to judge on



which Side the Truth lies. Those who contend for the Doctrines of *Unconditional Election*, &c. and ground all on the *wild Notions* of an unlimited Sovereignty, place the Salvation of the *Few* who shall be saved, on a *certain irrevocable unconditional Decree*: So that, if *Faith* and *Repentance must be* in these Persons, it will follow, these Virtues *must be*, in themselves, a Part of the Divine Decree, and *certain as* the Salvation *itself*. Here, then, tho' Repentance and Amendment wear the *Outside* of moral Duties, they are *little*, if *at all*, better than a *mechanical* Operation of the Spirit, in effecting the Salvation of the Elect: And, in this Respect, it must be allowed, those who hold the Doctrine of Election, &c. are very consistent with themselves, in denying to Repentance and Amendment, *any Part* in the Honour of Man's Salvation; for no Christian can, on *this* Principle, be praise-worthy for his Virtue: It destroys Virtue, *truly* and *properly* so called; and, instead of rendering Man, as he *really* is, a glorious and intelligent Agent, cloathed with *Reason*, and invested with *Freedom*, honoured and enlightned with *Divine Revelation*, it renders him that absurd, ridiculous Thing, called an *Intelligent Machine*.

On the other hand, if we consider Faith and Repentance as *moral Duties*, the Affair will stand in another Light. Man will be restored to his *Freedom*, as well as his *Duty*: His Understanding, given him to be seriously and diligently exercised, in the Search after Truth, will



will appear of *some Weight* and Significancy. All the *Exhortations* and *Intreaties* with which the Gospel abounds, being *kindly* and *wisely suited* to prevail on such a free and intelligent Creature, will appear in their genuine *Lustre* and *Fitness*: Whereas, if Man be not an Agent, in the true and proper Sense of the Word, (without regard to those silly and impertinent Distinctions made by some Writers, *between moral and natural Powers, immediate and remote Causes of Sin*) all Intreaties, Exhortations and Threatnings, are merely beating the Air; and Preaching itself can be *no more* than one of the Materials in the great Machine.

God created Man *upright* and *free*; gave him a Law suited to the Nature of his *Being and Powers*; and threatned *Death*, in case of *Transgression*: Man being free, to *stand* or *fall*, unadvisedly departed from his Allegiance. Here now these Gentlemen say, "That Repentance and Amendment can be no Reparation; and yet Divine Justice must be satisfied. The Sentence of Death, or Punishment due to Sin, will, in some sort, be executed."

The Sin, I grant, once committed, *cannot* be undone again: Nothing *done*, and *passed*, is to be *called back*. And, in this Sense, *Punishment* is *no more* a full Satisfaction for Sin, than Repentance and Amendment. Repentance and Amendment, I suppose to be *much better* than *Impenitence* and Persisting in Evil, or than even Standing still between both: And, there-

fore, Repentance and Amendment must, surely, have more Merit than these Men are willing to allow them.

Mr. *Wilson* has been pleased to give up the Argument “ of God’s having no Right, in Point “ of Sovereignty, to pass by our Offences, on “ the Terms of Repentance and Amendment ;” and to contend for *Fact*. But here, as they contend so much for the *Honour* of God’s Law, and the *Necessity* of satisfying Vindictive Justice, let me ask, if that Right which they allow to *reside* in God, to forgive Sin, &c. can be any more than a mere *empty Compliment* paid to the Almighty; for, without Creation of intelligent Beings, such a Right would have been *wholly out* of the Case; and when such a Creature as Man is produced, as he *must owe* a Duty to his Creator, the *Necessity* of a Law is implied, in the *very Nature* of the Proceeding: So that this brings them inevitably to a *virtual Denial* of this Right in God; which, at other Times, to avoid a Pinch, they would seem to acknowledge. And pray (for it will bear Repetition) let them inform us, If Vindictive Justice *must be* so punctually satisfied, how they provide for the *Divine Veracity*, when the Threatning was *positive*; *In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*: And yet, it seems, *another*, and *innocent too*, was made the Sufferer: So that, in this Doctrine, there is neither *Truth*, *Justice*, nor *Mercy*. Their Justice is Cruelty, that destroys Mercy, and



and Truth has no Business here. And, therefore, I hope, another Account of the Affair may be better entertained.

That *Punishment*, of one *kind* or *other*, follows from, or accompanies Transgression, every Christian will allow: And, as the *best Life* and Happiness of the Soul, consists in the gracious Smiles of the Divine Being, bestowed on *Innocence* and *true Piety*, so Man, deviating from this *Rectitude* of Mind and Behaviour, must naturally sink into a State of *Horror* and *Unhappiness*. And this *miserable* State of Mind, the Loss of those gracious Influences of the Divine Spirit, is, I doubt not, very often intended by the Word *Death*, as it stands in the *Bible*, and has a *spiritual Relation* to spiritual Affairs. Now, it is not only the Work of right Reason, but of *Divine Grace* also, in *Conjunction* therewith, to disturb the *Soul*, and awaken it into a due Sense of its *Crime*, and Condition: And, as this State *itself* may be called *Death*, so it is always accompanied with Punishment; sometimes very *intense* and *severe*. These *Arrows* of the *Almighty* fly *swift*, and lodge *deep* in the *Soul*: But if the Mind be duly sensible of its Fall, stands penitent, humble, and beseeching before the Throne of Grace; and verifies the Sincerity of its Repentance, by bringing forth suitable Fruits; dare any Man say, that 'tis a Breach of *Divine Justice*, to admit such a Penitent to free Pardon and Forgiveness, on *these Conditions only*? Has not God, in the most *solemn Manner*, delegated such a Power



to Man, and commanded him, under the *severest Penalties*, to exercise this amiable Quality, in all kind and beneficent Actions, towards his Fellow-Creatures? And is it not very strange, he *should not* be able to act in this manner himself, by his own Creatures? Certainly this Bounty, and *the Authority* to dispense it, must *ever, unalterably, and eternally* reside in the supreme Source of all Power and Goodness. Surely, he can *no more* be divested of this Right, or even divest himself of it, than he can *deny, or annihilate* himself. And it is *wonderful* how so preposterous a Sentiment could ever get into the Head of an *Idiot*: Much more wonderful is it, how it came to obtain among Men of the most finished Understanding.

As Sin is an *immoral Act*, proceeding from an *Abuse* of our intellectual Powers, *so are* Repentance and Amendment *moral Duties*, arising from a *right Use*, or Application of these Powers. And *Man* is as much an *Agent* in his Restoration, as in his *Fall*: At *least*, he is an Agent in *both*. The *first* Thing to be done, after Sin, is a *serious Exertion* of our Faculties (assisted by a superior Principle) in the Consideration of *its* Heinousness and Malignity: In which Process, the Understanding is *free*, and proceeds upon *rational Motives*; and the Effect of *this Duty*, well exercised, is generally answerable, *viz.* a *true Sorrow* for Sin: The best Endeavours to avoid it for the future, are humble Solicitations for Pardon, directed to  
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that *never-failing Fountain of Mercy*, who *invites the Weary and the Heavy-laden to come unto him for Rest*; and declares that *whosoever cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out*. These, then, are *evidently moral Duties*, to which Men are excited by *every moral and rational Motive*. This, I think, is the *very Truth* of the Case; and, on these Principles, *the Crown of immortal Life* stands *fair and full to View*, and in the Power of all to attain; but it is *not tied* arbitrarily to, or forced on any of the Elect, so called. The true Notion of *moral Agency* in Man, as it *establishes the former*, *excludes absolutely the latter*. And I appeal to my Readers, if this be not a *very right* and rational Account of *Sin, of Repentance, Humiliation, and Amendment*; and of *God's sovereign, unalienable Right*, to admit Man to fresh Grace and Favour, on these Terms and Conditions. Let my Opponents shew a better, if they can.

*Remarks, P. 8.* Mr. *Wilson* is so kind as to think, "Three or four well-chosen Texts of Scripture, clear against the Doctrine of original Sin, might serve my Purpose." He, however, has produced one or two, *which he thinks in Favour of it*.

The xviiiith Chapter of *Ezekiel* affords, I think, the strongest Proof, against this Doctrine: 'Tis the *great God too, speaking for himself*, and with no small Indignation against the *Jews*, for thinking Him capable of doing a Thing so unjust, as to *punish the innocent Son for the guilty Father*. But as to *Rigour* and



*Duration* of Punishment, they seemed not to charge the Almighty with such enormous Cruelties as our *modern Calvinists* are wont to do. I wish Mr. *Wilson* would duly attend to *what the great God has here spoken for himself*. St. *Paul* has also assured us, that every Man shall be punished or rewarded, according to the Deeds done in his Body: \* Not what *Adam* did before, whose Sin was never done in my Body. If they allow these to be Proofs (and allow them they must, unless they depart from the plain Words of the Text) I will undertake to produce a Thousand such as these. If they reject them, the Argument immediately changes to what, in *Remarks*, Page 9. Mr. *Wilson* calls *Relative Guilt*. But this is contrary to the Rule laid down in the Beginning, for interpreting Scripture; and so cannot be true: Yet for a full and further Satisfaction, not only here, but, perhaps, in every other Point, which this Book may seem to leave defective, I refer the Reader to the Second Edition of a Book lately published, intituled, *Free and Impartial Thoughts on the Sovereignty of God, the Doctrines of Election, Reprobation, and Original Sin*: Where, if I mistake not, their *leading Principles*, on which the others depend, are effectually rooted up. Their absolute Silence has, by some of the best Judges, been deemed a powerful Indication of their *Inability* to answer. The *near Relation* in which I stand to the *Author* of that Pamphlet, will abundantly justify my calling it in here, in

\* Rom. ii. 6.



Aid of my present Argument. And I lie under the same Obligation, to account to the Publick for *all* its *Defects*, as I do for my present Performance.

Mr. *Wilson* quotes four Verses from *Rom. v.* and makes the following Remark, “ Now let  
 “ Condemnation and Death be what they  
 “ will, if they fall upon all Men, Infants not  
 “ excepted, as the Consequence of *Adam's*  
 “ Sin; our Author would do well to clear up  
 “ the Justice of God in the Procedure, even  
 “ upon the *lowest possible* Interpretation, before  
 “ he so severely charges us with Contradiction  
 “ or Credulity.”

Whatever be the true Meaning of this Place, I believe the Book above referred to will fully shew, that neither this, nor *any other* Part of the *Bible*, can bear the hard and terrifying Sense put by the *Calvinists* on this Text: And, therefore, it is, at present, a very sufficient *general Answer*, to say, it has no Meaning inconsistent with our *best* and *clearest* Ideas of the Divine Perfections. The clearest Scriptures, militating against this, are to be rejected, and either left *unexplained*, or a *better Sense* sought after.

There are many People, who believe *Adam* was created in a State of *Immortality*, which he *forfeited* in his *Fall*; and that the Condemnation here intended, was *only* a Condemnation to *temporal Death*. Now, if this was the Case, that *Immortality* was conditionally bestowed on *Adam*: If it was in his Power to *destroy it* by *Sin*, or transmit it by *Righteousness* to his  
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*Posterity* ; allowing *Adam* to be acquainted with this, it was not God, but *Adam*, who *did* this Injury to his Posterity : And, therefore, the Justice of God, as to Impeachment is quite out of the Question. As in the Case of Treason, *Free and Impartial Thoughts*, Page 30. " It is true, the *Heir* of a *Rebel Convict* " cannot, according to our Laws, inherit his " Father's Estate. But what then ? Does it " deprive him of any thing that was his own " before ? No ; the Law convicts the *Rebel*, while in Possession of his Estate, which " it considers as his *own Property* ; and which " therefore, it justly takes away for his *own* " Offence, &c." Now, it is the *Rebel Father*, and not the *Prince*, who punishes the *Heir*. If Mr. *Wilson* can *acquit* the Justice of the one, he must also acquit the other. Again, let the Inconveniencies arising from *Adam's* Fall be what they will, I doubt not but the *Power* and *Providence* of *God* can, and will, abundantly provide for his Justice, by making us *other*, and *ample Amends*.

Nor can *Adam's* being a *Type of Christ*, suppose the Doctrine of *Original Sin* to be true, in the *Sense* maintained by Mr. *Wilson*. Let us transcribe, and consider the Text he brings, 1 *Cor.* xv. 22. " For as in *Adam* all die, so in " *Christ* shall all be made alive ; the first " *Adam* was made a living Soul, the last *Adam* " a quickening Spirit ; the first Man is of the " Earth earthly, the second Man is the Lord " from Heaven ; and as we have borne the " Image



“ Image of the Earthly, we shall also bear the  
 “ Image of the Heavenly.”

There are *many People*, who revere the Scripture as the *Word of God*, yet make very free in their Interpretations: If the *plain, literal Sense* makes for them, it is *readily admitted*; if *against* them, another more remote Meaning must, at *all Events*, be had. In a Text before us, of Mr. *Wilson's Remarks*, Page 9. one would think, the ALL to be *made alive in Christ*, were as *many* as the ALL which *died in Adam*: But the Gentlemen with whom I have now to do, if I do not mistake them, admit of *no such Thing*. But to let that pass, I look upon the other Text to bear, or, at least, to be capable of a *more spiritual* Meaning than is generally imagined. By *Adam*, or by the *first Man*, may be understood a *State of Sin*; and by the second *Adam*, or *Jesus Christ*, a *State of Righteousness*; under which *two States* all Men are included. *Death*, or *Punishment*, belongs to the *one*; and *Life*, or *Happiness*, is the Portion of the *other*. There is another Text which favours this Explication, *viz.* “ Seeing that ye have put off the old Man, “ with his Deeds, and have put on the new “ Man, &c.”\* Whatever the true Sense may be, it is *wild Work* to endeavour to establish their *Fundamental Doctrines* on obscure and ambiguous Parts of the Bible; and which too, in the Sense they are pleased to understand them, strike at the very *Root* and *Foundation* of all

\* Col. iii. 9, 10.



Virtue. However, one Concession I will freely make, *viz.* If these Gentlemen can disprove, or set my main Principles aside, exhibited here, and in the Book before referred to, I will yield them any Interpretation of *this*, or of *any other* Text; such as those of *Achan*, *Gebazi*, &c. Till they do this, producing such Passages will only set their Doctrines in a more abhorrent View.

I had charged them, in the *Vindication*, with *Doctrines subjecting Infants to endless and inconceivable Torments*. To which, (*Remarks*, P. 10.) Mr. *Wilson* answers, "Who, in the *present Day*, asserts it? Secret Things belong to God. It is one Thing to reason about the Demerit of Sin, and another to fix the actual Execution of Vengeance. We dare not set Bounds to the *Mercy* of God; and are well assured the Blood of Christ may be applied to them for Salvation, if so it seem good in the Sight of the Lord."

It seems then, that formerly some Persons of these Sentiments, were forward enough to fix the actual Execution of Divine Vengeance on the Soul of many a poor Infant: And the private Discourse I myself have heard from some Men of this Principle, would make even a *Savage* tremble. And tho' Mr. *Wilson*, in Words, may not undertake to subject Infants to endless and inconceivable Torments, on the Score of *Adam's* Sin, yet he cares not to acquit them from the Justice of that rigorous Sentence: And that very ingenious Salvo, altogether in the refined Strain

of The Ruin and Recovery, *That they may be saved, if the Lord pleases*, seems to be no more than an *ingenious Disguise* of a Principle, which however strongly *Faith* may inforce, Reason *blushes*, and is ashamed to confess it, naked and bare as it is in itself. The *Devil* himself may be saved, *if the Lord so pleaseth*. They leave Infants to the Divine Mercy, but I fear with *very little* Dependence on it, except they are of the *Elect*. I ask Mr. *Wilson* seriously, if, as he maintains the Doctrine of *Election*, he does not fully believe, that some Children, and the greater Number too, dying in their Infancy, are *utterly excluded* from the Benefits of Christ's Blood, and sent to the infernal Mansions of *Misery* below? Does not their Principle of *Election strongly induce*, if not *absolutely infer* this Sentiment? Is not this the very Source from whence some have adventured to affirm, *There are in Hell Children not a Span long*. As touching the *Non-elect*, whether *Infants* or *Adult*, I think my *Free and Impartial Thoughts* have proved, that, on their Principles, the one is *no more* an Object of Mercy than the other. 2d Edit. P. 57, 58.

Remarks, P. 111. "He (*The Vindication*) proceeds to give us a very remarkable Definition of Divine Justice, *That it consists in not punishing the Innocent, rather than exacting the utmost Mite of every poor Sinner.*" And this Mr. *Wilson* allows to be one Idea of it. I should be glad he would shew me where I have made it the whole of Justice. I, indeed, *op-*  
*pose*



*pose it to their extravagant Notions of vindictive, unrelenting Justice. But Mr. Wilson always thought that Mitigation and Abatement belonged to Mercy rather than Justice. I should be glad to see what he brings this against; not my Definition; for that mentions only the Innocent, to whom Mitigation and Abatement are not applicable. They do, indeed, belong to Mercy; but if God's Justice be that strict and unrelenting Thing, Mercy, as I before observed, is entirely destroyed. And where have I said, that God cannot punish the Guilty; or that he will not?*

As to his Query, "How Jesus, who was  
" holy, harmless and undefiled, could be made  
" a Curse, but as he bore our Sins in his own  
" Body, on the Tree," The Answer is obvious, That it is only an Expression drawn from a Jewish Saying, mentioned by St. Paul, "Curled is every one that hangeth on a  
" Tree;"\* and applied to our Lord, because he hanged on the Cross.

Again, "As to our imputing, or taking  
" away of Sin, we make no Pretensions this  
" Way, but rest in the Account that God has  
" given us, That as, by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners, so, by the  
" Obedience of One, shall many be made  
" Righteous." Here again, they are ashamed of their Doctrine which *does this*. It is evident the Charge was laid against the Doctrine, which they holding, are obliged to maintain against

\* Gal. iii. 13.



that Charge. Who could have thought of this pretty *Evasion*? Or who charged them with being the *actual Imputers*, any more than the *actual Rewarders* and *Punishers* of the Innocent and Guilty. We know, that if their Doctrines be true, it is God who *imputes* and *punishes* too.

*Remarks*, Page 12. " We have a Quotation from the learned Mr. Gill : Whence our Author had it, does not appear ; but with him it stands thus, *That Men have a Right to bind their Heirs to the Execution of certain Things.*"

And because I had said this was very true, Mr. *Wilson* replies, " If so, Mr. Gill, one would think, is acquitted ; for this is all he is said to have asserted."

I hope Mr. *Wilson* will be more candid in his Reflections on me for Unfairness hereafter. Does not the *Vindication*, Page 10. introduce this Expression of Mr. Gill, by an Account of the Doctrines of *Election*, *Reprobation*, and *Original Sin*, and the Covenant supposed to have been made between God and Adam? And does not all this shew the Fitness and Propriety of my producing those Expressions, as well as the End for which Mr. Gill uses them, viz. in *Justification* of the Doctrine of *Original Sin*? I hope Mr. *Wilson* will not overlook a Matter so obvious, for the future. But how does he answer my Argument, applied in the same Page to Mr. Gill? Why, as follows, *Remarks*, P. 12. " Similitudes, we all know, are rather for  
" Illustrations."

“ Illustration than Proof: And, I think, it  
 “ illogical enough to argue from *Incapacity* to  
 “ *no Obligation*. *Adam*, with our Author  
 “ Leave, was far from being a Bankrupt when  
 “ the Contract was first made, &c.”

See a *Full Answer* to this, in *Free and Impar-  
 tial Thoughts*. I shall, notwithstanding, just  
 observe, That Similitudes, if they make for  
 these Gentlemen, shall pass for *Proof*; if against  
 them, they are overstrained, and become *bar-  
 Words, and extravagant Exclamations*. Besides  
 do not I give the Reason *why* a Man can bind  
*his Heirs*; and why they *may*, or *may not*, be  
 obliged to comply with such Obligations? And  
 does not common Reason and Justice speak for  
 me, in *both Cases*? But *Adam* was no Bank-  
 rupt, &c. This seems to be urged as a fur-  
 ther Justification of the Use of Mr. Gill's Simi-  
 litude. Let us see how it turns out. A Man  
 when he makes his Will, may be worth Ten  
 thousand Pounds, and certainly, in a Condition  
 to will the one half away in *Legacies*, and  
 oblige his Heir to see them satisfied: Yet, after  
 this he becomes insolvent, the Will is of  
 no more Force than one that is made under a  
 State of Insolvency. Nor is it so *very Illogica-*  
 to argue from *Incapacity* to *no Obligation*. Where  
 the Incapacity is not self-caused, by the Abuse  
 of our own intellectual Powers; Incapacity and  
 no Obligation are *Twin-born and inseparable*  
*Companions*. I am surpris'd these Gentlemen  
 will be continually appealing to worldly Trans-  
 actions,



actions, in Justification of their own Sentiments, when temporal Justice is, in the main, too even and righteous a Thing, to lend the least Aid to such *unsacred Opinions*: And it is only by overstraining and *torturing* a few single Proceedings of the State, as they do by the Bible, that they are able to derive the least Colour of an Argument in their Favour: The single Instances selected by them, well understood, and rightly explained, amount generally to a Demonstration against them. And, therefore, I expect, or desire, to hear no more of this *decrepit Bankrupt* Argument of theirs.

*Remarks*, Page 13. " That the Omniscient  
 " God foreknew the Fall, is of easy Proof :  
 " That he could have prevented it, will not be  
 " denied ; and therefore he must will to per-  
 " mit it. And I think the Scripture is clear,  
 " Christ came that we might have *Life*, which  
 " is a *Repair* ; and that we might have it  
 " *more abundantly*, which to me is a visible  
 " and *important Improvement*. He may as  
 " well be angry with Christ, who says, *Broad*  
 " *is the Way*, &c."

The Doctrine of the *Foreknowledge of God*, in regard to the Fall of Man, is a Point of too much Importance to be lightly passed over ; and I must here deal VERY closely and freely. And I humbly request a full, open, and candid Answer, far remote from any of those *ingenious Reserves*, which Men are too apt to lean upon, rather than *declare* a Doctrine plainly, which they are either *ashamed* of, or *want*



*Skill* to defend. I agree with them in the Divine Foreknowledge, but suspect strongly, that in another Point we differ widely. Let them declare, if it be not their Faith, that God has, without Exception, absolutely willed every thing which comes to pass in the World. Let them *deny*, or *confess* this plainly.

That mere Foreknowledge has no physical Ability to produce any future Event, is now more generally allowed than formerly: Nevertheless, I shall endeavour to convince those who *do not* see this Matter in its true Light. But to the other Part first—If every thing is willed, *no Event* can be otherwise than it is. There is an End, at once, put to *Vice* and *Virtue*, properly understood; they cease to be more than mere *Names* and *Machines*; and an *irresistible Fatality* will inevitably follow. All must be resolved into an absolute Sovereignty; and it will be *utterly impertinent* to talk about the *Wisdom*, *Mercy*, and *Goodness* of the *Creator*: Every *other* Attribute is swallowed up in *Sovereign Power* and *Pleasure*; the *Fitness* of *Rewards* and *Punishments* is entirely *destroyed*; and nothing but *Misery*, *Anarchy*, and *Confusion* succeeds: And this too, on the Principles of those Gentlemen who contend so zealously for *maintaining a perfect Order and Harmony among the Divine Attributes*. Surely nothing can be wonderful in our Time!

When I have urged to Gentlemen of this Sentiment, that Passage of the New Testament,

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ment, that God wills the Salvation of all Men ;\* the Answer has been, " Then every Man must " be saved, because whatever God wills MUST " come to pass ; and no Man can conquer the " ALMIGHTY." Which leads me to propound a few Questions, in respect to the *State and Fall of Adam*, which, I think, deserve their serious Attention. Was not *Adam* created *upright and free* ? Did not God give him a Law, and command him to keep it ? Now, if God willed *Adam* to obey this Law, how came it about, that *Adam*, by Disobedience, should be *able to conquer the Almighty* ? If, on the contrary, they alledge that God willed the Fall of *Adam*, how, on this same Principle of theirs, the *Absoluteness of God's Will*, could *Adam* be able to maintain his Innocence ? And what will the Fate of these Gentlemen be, but an *absolute irremediable Overthrow of all* their Arguments, drawn from the Covenant entered into between God and Man ; the Breach of which, as *they say*, exposed all the human Race to the *just and eternal Vengeance* of the Almighty ? Or, in the third Place, will they contend, that God's Will, in either Case of *Adam's Standing or Falling*, was *wholly indifferent* ? Let them give a full and candid Answer. And as the Principles of some, in the *present Day*, † whose Religion, like Fashions, may be sometimes given to change, I would not confine them too narrowly. If *Calvin*, or *The Assemblies Catechism*, be too severe

\* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

† Rem. P. 10.



for their more tender and Christian Sentiments, they shall have my free Consent, to discard, out of their *Creed*, as much of this Sort as they please: And *Calvin*, the *Assemblies Catechism*, and *these Gentlemen*, shall be heard distinctly for themselves. But if *Calvin* and the *Assemblies Catechism* must be adhered to, let my Opponent stick close to the *Principles* of the one, and the *Doctrines* of the other, without such far-fetch'd ingenious *Palliations* of the grim Sort of their *Doctrines*, as argues their being ashamed to acknowledge and defend them, in the Sense they believe them. It is a hard Case to combat with Men, who make it *their Study* to conceal and obscure, rather than confess and defend their *Doctrines*. Their great Apostle *Calvin*, in Time of Youth and Inexperience, held out his *Doctrines* to the World *without Art* or Disguise, in all their native and genuine *Horrors*: And tho', we believe, he retained his *Principles* to the last, he learnt afterwards to paint them to the World, with such great *Art* and *Dexterity*, that it was even possible to mistake them for their *opposite* and amiable *Doctrines*. Does not *The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind* mention, and applaud him for this? And had *Calvin*, in that Point, even a more ingenious *perfect Imitator*, than the ingenious and celebrated *Author* of that Book?

Let us next inquire, what is *Foreknowledge* in God, in regard to future Events? or whether it makes Things to be what they are, any more than

than human Knowledge is the Cause of any Event, which comes to pass before *our own Eyes*?

*Knowledge* and *Power* are quite different Things. There is no manner of *Efficiency* in Knowledge, to bring about any Event. Does not every Man perceive, that Knowledge and Power, in himself, are *quite different Things*? That he exerts the *one* to the right understanding of Duty, *before* the Principle of Power is exerted, to put such Duties into Practice? And tho' God *may* have eternally known what *every free* and intelligent Being would do, this Knowledge could have *no Tendency* to produce the Action. And tho' one Thing *cannot*, perhaps, be in the Divine Mind either *before* or *after* another, yet, in the Order of our Ideas, we may apprehend the *Action* to be known *before* the Event.

But how (say some Men) if the Event is *foreknown*, can it be otherwise? We grant the Event *will be* but one in itself, and altogether *as certain*, when done, tho' depending on the Actions of a *free Being*, as tho' it had been predestinated, and the Power of God *irresistably* exerted to bring it to pass. Every *free Agent* has, in the Event of Things, *Power* to be *happy* or *miserable*. But pray observe, *one* of these he *must be*; and as this *will be* determined *at last*, where is the Absurdity of supposing that God *may be able* to foresee in what *Manner*, and to what *End*, such a free Being *will* employ its Faculties, the *Event*, the *Happiness*



*ness* or *Misery* of Man, being only the *Consequences* of his Behaviour? If we grant that a *Contingency* may be foreknown, the Argument of *Constraint*, drawn from the Foreknowledge of God, *ceases* to be of any Weight; nay, it would, if allowed, contradict the *very Terms* of the Proposition, as here stated, the Freedom of Man, as consistent with the Divine Foreknowledge, being *expressly mentioned therein*.

Man, I allow, *cannot* be both *free* and *not free*, at the same Time; but as our Knowledge of any Event, when it happens, has *no Influence* on the Event itself, *neither* can God's knowing beforehand, be the immediate Cause of those Actions which produce the Event. Consider, the Action of *this Day* was, as we count Time, known Millions of Years *before* it happened: *Foreknowledge* in God was as *perfect* then as it has been *since*; and yet the Action *did not* follow immediately upon it: If there is (*as every Man finds*) no Manner of Efficiency in Knowledge, to bring to pass Events, *something else must operate* to produce them; and that is the Power *we exert* in ourselves. Knowledge, tho' it has *no Power* in itself, is nevertheless *necessary*, in order to *right Action*, both in God and his *Creatures*; but *Action*, or the Power *by which* we produce it, is a quite different Exercise of the Soul. And it would be as absurd to put Knowledge in the *Place* of Power, as to substitute *Hearing* for *Smelling*: The Ear may as *well see*, as Knowledge can be said to *act* or to *do*. The Argument then is at length  
brought

brought into a narrow Compass. It is either *possible*, or *impossible*, for God to foreknow what a free Being *will* (*not must*) do. If possible, the Freedom is acknowledged, and the Plea that Foreknowledge *binds* the Event, at once *irrecoverably given up*. If impossible, then it will be as great a *Contradiction* for God to foreknow what is impossible to be foreknown, as it is impossible for *Him* to do *what is* in itself an *absolute Contradiction*, and in *itself* impossible to be effected. And this *latter Notion*, were there any Necessity to admit it, would be *abundantly more* agreeable, than to destroy the Freedom of Man. He that asks, How an Event can be otherwise than God foreknows it *will be*, may as reasonably insist, that Man should have a Power *to do*, and *not to do* the same Action, at the same Time: To *this* extravagant Length would such a Method of Enquiry carry us. Deity foreknows what Man *will*, not what he *must* do. The only Thing that perplexes *some Minds*, is to understand the *Way* and *Manner* of the Divine Foreknowledge, in regard to future Contingencies; which, tho' a Matter of Difficulty to comprehend, is *Quite beside the Argument*. And when we consider, that tho' Man *be* a free and accountable Being, yet when Life and Action is *over*, the Event, tho' it might, at one Time, have been quite the Reverse, is *now fixed* as fast as Fate itself, or *Almighty Power* could bind it. Whoever contends for the Divine Foreknowledge, and its absolute Influence on our Actions, contends for  
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an absolute Fatality; which *must* have operated with equal Strength, in regard to the *Fall* of *Angels*, as to *Adam* in *Paradise*; in Behalf of whose Freedom much has been said by *some*, who call themselves *Calvinists*. I hope this Account of Foreknowledge is not altogether beside the Truth of the Case.

As to the Expression, "That God *must* will to permit the Fall;"—'Tis *clear* that he permitted it: And methinks Mr. *Wilson* might have left the *WILL* out; for, I think a *latent Approbation* of the *Fall* seems to be hereby intended, tho' ingeniously concealed under *this Manner* of Expression: And tho' it may, in the Opinion of some, who do not understand the *Delicacy* these Gentlemen use in expressing themselves on these tender Points, look like a *naked Permission only*, yet there be those who *well understand* it: And it is possible to converse as *hiddently*, in the Use of common *English Words*, as by the *obscurest Signs and Tokens*.

The next Thing, in respect to the *broad and narrow Way*, is abundantly too hasty; for I condemn their Doctrines, *because* they ascribe the different Conditions of Mankind to the *arbitrary Pleasure* of the Almighty: And the extreme Misery and Wretchedness of the far greatest Number, is, surely, sufficient Ground for Complaint; and proves that, on the Scheme of Election, Christ *did not*, the *whole human Race* considered, *effectually repair* the Damage

of the Fall: Whereas our *Saviour*, at *most*, only declares the Fact, but *does not* put it upon the Sovereign Will or Pleasure of Deity, or deny Man's Freedom. It appears, that if Man is *free*, the Cause of his Unhappiness must not be in God, but *in himself*. And I dare venture to affirm, that allowing all Mankind to be free, and to have it in their Power to become everlastingly happy; who yet, by abusing this Liberty, all fall into Condemnation; that this Scheme would be more just and equitable in itself, than a System, which out of a *Thousand* should save *Nine hundred and ninety-nine*, and condemn arbitrarily the *single remaining Person*, to eternal and unspeakable Misery.

His next Account (*Remarks*, P. 14.) tells us, "That their Doctrine assures the Salvation of many Thousands, while ours, it seems, has no Security at all." Now, I think, their Doctrine represents *God* as such an uncertain and arbitrary Being, as *cannot assure*, or *secure* the Salvation of a *single Soul*, even granting their Doctrine of Election to be *clearly revealed* in Scripture. If God, by an arbitrary Decree, without Regard to *previous Fitness*, has told me, that I am a *chosen Vessel*; and, at the same Time, without Regard to any *previous Unfitness*, condemned Millions of innocent Souls to suffer; and my Dependence on the Performance of his Promise is *built only* on the moral Attributes of Deity; and the same Knowledge which I have of these Attributes, teaches me, that a *Breach of Promise* made to

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the *Elect*, is *nothing* near so bad, nor so flagrant a Violation of his moral Perfections, as punishing the *Non-elect* in so severe a Manner. Is not this Consideration alone sufficient to make our Elect Gentlemen *tremble*? But for an intire Confutation of Mr. *Wilson*, on this Head, I refer to the aforesaid *Free Thoughts* where this Point is, I hope, *carefully* and *copiously* discuss'd, in a Method *intirely* new.

The next Thing is the Infinity of the Merits of Christ, where, Mr. *Wilson* says, “another Instance of (my) Unfairness. What among us ever asserted, they were infinite in their Application?” But pray, *why* ought these Merits to be accounted infinite, unless with a View to apply them *every where* to the whole human Race, where they are wanted?

“They are (*says he*) infinite in their Worth and Value, arising from the infinite Glory of Christ's Person.”

Is *Christ's Person* then infinite? What do they mean by *Person*? And why will they never define this Word? As it relates to the *Trinity*, I always understood by Christ's Person, *the created INTELLIGENT PART* which, I think, cannot be stiled Infinite. And how *Subjects* can have Attributes of *Infinity* when the Subject itself is *not infinite*, is the Business to explain. Our Lord's suffering, as a *Surety* or *Representative*, has been already considered.

Mr. *Wilson* allows, “That Man, absolutely bounded in his Understanding and Faculties  
“ cannot

“ cannot have Actions that are infinite.” Is not *this Concession* destructive of the Doctrine of those who hold the Necessity of an infinite Satisfaction? Is it not, in the first Place, *strictly affirmed*, that Sin, *because committed against an infinite God, is infinite?* And is not the Necessity of an *infinite Person* suffering and making an infinite Atonement, built on *this very Bottom?* Is not Man, as a finite Creature, said to be incapable of this Satisfaction? And yet, if our Sin be infinite, does not this clearly prove that Man, *bounded in his Understanding and Faculties, may have Actions which are infinite?* Either this Doctrine is false, and so the Necessity of an infinite Atonement *unnecessary*; or Mr. *Wilson* must have made a very *dangerous and heterodox Concession*.

Again, P. 14, 15. “ We put our Author upon the Proof, where the Scripture claims, for Repentance and Amendment, a Part in the Honour of Man’s Redemption and Salvation.”

The Proof lies in a short Compass. Punishment is every where threatned to the Disobedient and Impenitent. The truest Ideas of the Gospel, unless we join Obedience thereto, will not avail us. And must not the contrary be true of those who conform to the Precepts and Commands of our Saviour? Read the following few Scriptures, *Ezek. xiv. 6. xviii. 30. Joel ii. 14. Matt. iii. 2. Mark i. 15. Luke xiii. 3. Acts iii. 19. xxvi. 20. Rev. ii. 16. 21. 22.* If Man be free, and the Bible proves any



single Point, it is this which I am here called upon to make appear by Scripture. And upon the *universal Scheme*, Repentance and Amendment are, and *must be a Part of Man's justifying Righteousness in the Sight of God*: And the Bible claims them accordingly; for *Faith without Works is dead*. And therefore, Faith of itself saves no Man. The Grace of God is, indeed, an *Effect* of Divine Mercy; the *first* moving and influencing, tho' *not compelling* Cause of Man's Salvation. And on this Account it is, that Scripture, by way of Eminence, ascribes the *whole Salvation* of Man to this Grace: But it is only by way of Eminence, and not, as some superstitiously teach, in *utter Exclusion* of good Works, as bearing *no Part* in our justifying Righteousness, in the Sight of God. On the Principle of arbitrary and unconditional Election, I *may, indeed*, be wrong; but I can *only be* wrong on that Principle: And if Scripture is true, that Principle must be notoriously erroneous. Wherein did the Difference lay between the *faithful* and *unfaithful* Stewards, the *Sheep* and the *Goats*? *Well done good and faithful Servant*, and *Come ye Blessed*, were the gracious Words of Reception. And why? but that one *had not improved* his Talents, and the *other* had diligently improved his, and abounded in the Practice of all Virtue. Is there a Word mentioned about the Merits or Death of Christ? I think there is not; tho' I do not from thence infer, that his Death was of *no Benefit* to Man, as my Opponents,

ponents, on the contrary, where Christ's Death is mentioned, and *nothing* said about good Works, are apt *very hastily* to conclude, that the whole of Man's Salvation *rests only* on the mere Merits of Christ. I would not be *tedious* or *troublesome*, but yet I cannot help setting down the Substance of Part of a Debate I once had with a Gentleman, on this Subject. It was something like what follows.

"I affirm, then, *good Works* to be a Part of *our justifying Righteousness* in the Sight of God; and it is only the introducing rigid Doctrines, and the Misinterpretation of Scripture, that has led Men to set *good Works* so low as they do. To explain this, let us take notice of the *seeming Opposition* between St. Paul and St. James, about *Faith* and *Works*: St. Paul declares, "We are justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law.\* St. James declares, That true Faith is imperfect without Works: *By Works* (says he) *was Faith* (even the true Faith of *Abraham*) *made perfect*.† Now, it is impossible to *reconcile these* two Apostles, without allowing they spoke of *Works* quite different and *various*. The Works then, intended by St. Paul, might be only the ceremonial Part of the Law of *Moses*, or legal Righteousness — "It was not of these Works, lest any Man should boast:" Meaning generally, if not *entirely*, the formal *Jews*, who were very apt to boast and value themselves thereon; as is plain

\* Rom. iii. 28.

† Jam. ii. 22.

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from the Instance of the Publican and Pharisee, who went up to the Temple to pray. Without such Works, indeed, *Abraham* himself was justified, but not without his *Obedience* to God's Command: 1<sup>st</sup>, In forsaking his native Country: And, 2<sup>dly</sup>, In attempting to offer up *Isaac*. These were the good Works whereby St. *James* assures us *Abraham's* Faith was perfected; and without which, tho' in itself ever so strong and lively, he could not have been acceptable to God. The Works then intended by St. *James*, are either; 1<sup>st</sup>, Obedience to God in particular Cases, included in the Instance of *Abraham*. Or, 2<sup>dly</sup>, The Works of *Morality*, *Mercy*, and *Benevolence* towards each other, set forth or implied in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Verses of the second Chapter of the Epistle of *James*, wherein feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked, are strongly recommended. These Works, then, could not be those excluded by St. *Paul*, as being in no wise a proper Justification, in the Sight of God. On the contrary, we find him declaring, in many of his Epistles, that God, in the great Day, will determine Men to Misery or Happiness, not according to their Faith, but their Works. And if he any where makes mention of Faith, as the Cause of Justification, it must, I think, be either understood of the *Christian Faith* and Practice, as opposed to the *Mosaic Religion*, at that Time, in Point of Obligation, abolished; or it must be understood of the true Faith, and

its genuine good Fruits, of Meekness, Patience, &c. as opposed to Works done in Man's Will, *before or without* the Spirit's Inspiration : Which Works, Men are abundantly more apt to *value* themselves upon, than a *real Christian* is, on Works done by the Assistance of a Divine Inspiration ; which, as they cannot be rightly performed without the *Aid and Presence* of the *Spirit*, so the Mind of Man having this Guest, *can hardly* fail of knowing its own Wretchedness and Inability without it, in such Manner as excludes effectually *all Manner of Boasting*. Or, 3dly, If these Expressions of *St. Paul*, " Not of Works, lest any Man should boast," are understood of the *best Works* any Man can possibly do, the Meaning, I think, should be, that we are not *saved originally* and primarily by Works, but by *Faith*, or the *Gift of Grace*, the due Operation of which tends to produce true Faith. In short, the Foundation of our Happiness is laid in the Goodness and Mercy of God: *Of his Mercy hath he saved us*, &c. that is, he has, by the Gift of his Grace, put us into a Capacity of attaining Salvation ; enabled us to work that which is well pleasing in his Sight ; and so hath saved us on his own Part. In this Phrase then, " Not of Works, lest any Man should boast," *St. Paul* does not exclude good Works, *as no Part of our justifying Righteousness* ; but *only*, by way of Eminence, ascribes our Justification to *Faith*, or rather to the Gift of Grace, whereby *true Faith* is produced ; for tho' *Faith* is, in one



one Place, stiled *the Gift of God*, yet the same Apostle elsewhere calls it *the Faith of the Operation of God*: Whereby we may learn, that true Faith does not, in common, shoot up suddenly, like a Mushroom, but is the *regular* and *gradual* Effect of the Operation of *God's Grace*, duly obeyed by Man. What signifies our being saved here, *by the sole Merits of Christ*, and damned hereafter, for Want of Works? Or how can good Works, without which the Merits of Christ *do not save*, be rejected, as no Means of Justification? If we are not saved by good Works, because *Faith* goes before them; nor are we saved by *Faith*, because *Christ's Merits* go before that: Nor, on the same Argument, can we be saved by the *Death of Christ*, but by the Love and Mercy of God, who sent *Jesus* on purpose to redeem and save us. But the Truth is: We are saved by the *Goodness of God*, manifested in Christ; by Christ's own voluntary Obedience and Merits; by *Faith* and by *Works* also. These ARE ALL of them Causes or Means of our Salvation."

What Mr. *Wilson* alledges about a Propitiation, "Which shews God to be appeaseable, if  
 " the Glory of his Perfections, and the Honour of his Law be provided for," is, upon my Notion, very true, upon his quite otherwise: And the Divine Being, whose Justice is represented as *strict and unrelenting*, is no more appeaseable upon their Notion, than a *rigorous Creditor* is appeased by the full Payment of his Debt :

Debt : Which, if paid by another for the Debtor, entirely removes the Obligation. Here is, indeed, an *Act of Mercy* shewn : But pray consider by whom it is shewn, and seriously apply it to the Case before us. And again, if it is an *Act of Mercy* for me to pay another Man's Debt, it must have been the same Act of Mercy in the Creditor to have forgiven it. But this rigid Notion of *vindictive unrelenting Justice*, leaves nothing for Mercy to do, and carries Justice beyond its proper Bounds and Province, into Acts of Cruelty.

I believe, that the Sending and Manifestation of *Christ* in the Flesh, *tho' not* an absolute Propitiation for ANY, was a most wise and merciful Display of the Divine Goodness, *for the Benefit of ALL* ; not owing only to a *gracious* Proffer made by *our Saviour*, tho' he might lay down his Life freely, but chiefly to the *overflowing Mercy* and Compassion of the Creator, who was willing to be reconciled to Man, on the former standing and equitable Terms of Repentance and Amendment. And with this glorious and welcome Message did he send Christ into the World, as has already been proved ; and might, from innumerable Texts of Scripture, be yet further confirmed : " God " so loved the World, that he gave his only " begotten Son, &c." *John* iii. 16.

Which proves clearly, in Opposition to the Doctrine of an absolute Atonement, the yet greater Truth and Dignity of our Doctrine of God's Right to receive Man to free Pardon,

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chiefly on the Terms of Repentance and Amendment. It was a Doctrine continually avouched under the Law, as I have before proved.

And God has, by the *Gospel*, instead of annulling and contradicting it, given it a *fresh* and *solemn Sanction*. "God (says an inspired "Apostle) was, in Christ, reconciling the "World unto himself, not imputing their "Trespases unto them."\* These Words, well explained, may afford great Light. 1<sup>st</sup>, The Act of Reconciliation proceeds from God. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Allowing, tho' it is not here expressed, the Offer of this Reconciliation was made thro' Christ, yet by *not imputing our Trespases*, which is the same as forgiving them, the moral Duties of Repentance and Amendment are implied, because the Incurable and Impenitent have *no Right* to the Promises of *the Gospel*. We allow the Suffering of *Christ*, so freely offering up himself, to have *some Merit*; but, in *no Sense*, to rob the Mercy of God of its primary Honours and Acknowledgments. Were there not a proper Fitness in God's *forgiving Men*, on the Terms of Repentance and Amendment, *no Medium* could be ever found to unite God and his Creatures: The Suffering of the Innocent to effect this, is *no proper Medium at all*; while, on the other Method (*allowing Christ his divine Honours*) as Forgiveness, extended on the rational Terms of Repentance and Amendment, is perfectly suitable to the

\* 2 Cor. iii. 19.

*Sovereignty of God*, it is also agreeable to the *Nature and Duty of Man*. And *whoever builds his Hopes only* on the Merit or Atonement of Christ, had need look well to himself.

I think it expedient, in *this Place*, to consider a little the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, only because Mr. P. and Mr. W. have both *strongly recommended it* to my serious Perusal; for I am persuaded their Arguments, drawn from thence, have been *sufficiently answered* already: And therefore, I shall here study Brevity.

1<sup>st</sup>, It is *certain*, that the Author of this Epistle has carried his Expressions concerning the *Blood of Jesus* VERY HIGH: But when we consider, that it was the common Practice of the (allowed) Author of this Epistle, to make *great Concessions* towards the *Prejudices* of the Persons he had to deal with, “becoming” (according to his own Account) all Things “to all Men,” we shall naturally make *some Abatement*, in respect to the Fullness of some of his Expressions, contained in this Epistle: For, when the *same Apostle* wrote to some of the *Gentile Churches*, who *had not* laboured under *Jewish Prejudices*, or been *so much* accustomed to *Jewish bloody Sacrifices*, we do not hear so much, by Abundance, of the Necessity of shedding Blood. In the *second Place*, those Parts of this Epistle, which speak so strongly for the Sacrifice of *Christ's Death*, are not only to be understood consistent with other Parts of the same Epistle, but in *perfect Agree-*



ment with other Epistles of the same Apostle, wrote to other Churches. 3dly, We allow some Benefit to be gained by the Death of Christ: But what we contend against, is, the Sense which our Adversaries put upon these strong Scriptures, viz. "That, by the Blood of Jesus, the Elect are for ever purged, and put out of all Danger of miscarrying, in regard to Salvation." 4thly, If we shew them, both from other Parts of this Epistle, and the rest of St. Paul's Writings, that Salvation is *not so fixed*, but that the Believer *may fall away*, it will be abundantly sufficient for our present Purpose. But first, let me recommend Heb. vii. 27. to my Opponents Notice: "Who needeth not daily, as those High Priests, to offer up Sacrifice, first for his own Sins, and then for the People's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Is not this a *flat Contradiction* to other Parts of the Testament, which assure us, *That Jesus knew no Sin*? That the Author of this Epistle meant nothing further, by the strongest Expression used about the *Blood of Christ*, than a *conditional Benefit* appointed for Mankind, will appear from several Parts of this Epistle; it being evident, that between an *End* absolutely *fixed* and *determined*, and using of Means for the Attainment of this End, which *may possibly miscarry*, or fail of attaining it, there is something *utterly inexplicable and impossible*.

One Instance of the Possibility of miscarrying occurs, Heb. ii. 3. "How shall we escape,

“ if we neglect so great Salvation? &c.” This shews *it was* in their Power to neglect, else the Admonition had been fruitless. It may, indeed, be said, “ That tho’ the Event be “ fixed, yet this Admonition is no Contradiction to the Certainty of the Event, or a “ Measure in itself fruitless or absurd, but an “ Instrument used to bring the Event to pass.” This is their *dernier Resort*, and a mere Cobweb Subterfuge it is ; for, by such *wild Vagaries* as these, any Doctrine may be as well maintained *as this*. We all know, that where free Agency is in Man, he may either *act*, or *not act*, and *bring on*, or *frustrate* Events, accordingly.

Unless the *Hebrew Believers* were free Creatures, why does the Apostle deal with them as such, in whose Power it was, either to reject or comply with his Instructions? And allowing Man, in the Work of Salvation, to be a free Creature, I should be glad to know, what Methods of Treatment, *better suiting* such a State, could possibly be taken, than the whole Scripture *constantly makes use of*. “ Oh “ House of *Israel*, why will you die?” with many others of the like Import. Sure, the dealing with a Man *entirely necessitated* as with one *entirely free*, is an Absurdity to be espoused only by such whose Faith has been *long wedded* to *Contradictions*, such as the following, taken from *The Assemblies Confession of Faith*, Chap. iii. Of God’s eternal Decree. “ God from all “ Eternity did, by the most wise and holy “ Counsel



“ Counsel of his own Will, freely and un-  
 “ changeably ordain whatsoever comes to  
 “ pass.”

Here is an absolute and irresistible Fatality asserted; and God is made the Author of Sin, and of all that comes to pass. And one would think it impossible for the lowest Ignorance, and the highest Blasphemy united, to add more than the following Words, to those above;  
 “ Yet so as thereby, *neither is God* the Author  
 “ of Sin, nor is Violence offered to the Will of  
 “ the Creatures: Nor is the Liberty or Con-  
 “ tingency of second Causes taken away, BUT  
 “ RATHER ESTABLISHED.”

This is so *extravagantly impious* and *absurd*, that I shall not be able to comment on it, without being more severe than is agreeable to my present Inclination; and therefore I drop it, with only one Remark, If you want to give greater Speed to either Man or Horse, the only Method in the World is to tie their Legs. In *Heb. iii. 12.* is another Admonition, “Take  
 “ heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you  
 “ an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from  
 “ the living God.” The Beginning of the next Chapter contains another; and they are indeed so numerous, that one or two more, from this Epistle, shall suffice. *Chap. viii. 6.* we are told, “That Jesus is the Mediator of  
 “ a better Covenant, and established on better  
 “ Promises than that of the Law.” And the remaining Part of the Chapter informs us what that better Covenant was, not merely the Blood

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of Christ, *but a Spirit within*, and a Law written there. This is the Situation *into which* Christianity puts the Believer, who may either *resist* this Spirit, or *comply* with its Dictates; *tread it under Foot, and count it an unholy Thing*, or bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit. This Covenant, of which *Jesus is stiled the Mediator*, is a Law wrote within. A Law supposes *Freedom and Intelligence*; and *these also* suppose a Possibility of breaking this Law. And all combined, *fully set aside* our Adversaries Doctrine of *absolute Salvation*, drawn from this Epistle.

The Apostle, in another Place, speaks of some *who had made Shipwreck of Faith and of a good Conscience*. And pray hear what he lays down in *Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22*. "Well, because of Unbelief they were broken off; and thou standest by Faith: Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural Branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the Goodness, and Severity of God: On them which fell, SEVERITY; but toward thee, GOODNESS, if thou continue in his Goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Can any thing be plainer, or stronger Evidence than this? And, in the *last Place*, as to the *bloody Sacrifices* under the Law, it does not appear they were intended as absolute Expiations of Sin. Truth and Sincerity of Soul were requisite to their being *truly available* in the Divine View; for tho' *these*, and *many other*



*other* external Rites, were then commanded and required from that People; yet where Formality, Hypocrisy, and Wickedness, instead of Sincerity, Truth, and Righteousness prevailed; in what Contempt and Detestation were the People, and their Sacrifices, held by the Almighty! “ To what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord: I am full of the Burnt-offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts: And I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-goats—Your new Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my Soul hateth: they are a Trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them.” *Is. i. 11. 14.*

It appears then from hence, they were not absolute Expiations of Sin. Why then should the Blood of *Jesus* be absolutely so *now* (in which we allow the bloody Sacrifices under the Law, to be Types) especially when the *Divine Threatnings* and *Denunciations* against Sin, are under the Gospel no less severe, than they were against the formal and insincere Offerers, under the Law of *Moses*. Till I hear further from my good Friends, let this suffice in relation to the *Hebrews*, for the present.

The *Description* which our Saviour gives of the great *Day of Judgment*, is very sublime and awful: And, from some Part thereof, one would think, that *Jesus* had an *holy* and *abundant* *Fore-sight* of that strange Doctrine of Salvation by *Faith only*. If Faith would have done, why does our Saviour disclaim all *Religion*

*tion, Claim, or Pretence* of this kind ; and, without taking the least Notice of this, or of the Doctrine of absolute Merit, *sum up the awful Sentence* with, “ Depart from me ye cursed, “ into everlasting Fire ;” \* and this, only because of their Want of good Works. As this sets aside the Doctrine of *Faith* and *Merit* (as held by our Opponents) so, on the other hand, the Complaint against the *Goats* was, their *Sins and Iniquities*, or the Want of being found in the Practice of those Virtues, which gave the Sheep Acceptance ; as may be seen at large in the same Chapter, where Morality is set in high Estimation, by him who never erred, or spoke amiss.

And, indeed, the general Strain and Tenour of both the *Old and New Testament* run in the same Way. Hear how earnest and emphatical was the great *St. Paul*, as tho’ he had been aware of the Doctrine I am opposing : “ Let no Man deceive you with vain Words ; “ for because of these things cometh the Wrath “ of God upon the Children of Disobedience.” † It looks as if there were some in his Time, who inclined to give into the present Opinion about Faith and Merit : But the Completion of the Scheme was reserved for Gentlemen of a much *later Æra*. To these Accounts of our *Saviour* and *St. Paul*, let me add a Revelation of the blessed Disciple *St. John* the Divine. The Vision he saw (if it was a Vision) was exceeding glorious and sublime. It was not a

\* *Matt.* xxv. 41.

† *Eph.* v. 6.



*few* he beheld in the happy Regions, but a *great Multitude*, that no Man could number (and these not of one, two, or three Kinds of People, but) of *all Nations, Kindreds, Tongues, and People.*"\*

This is strongly declarative of the universal impartial Love of God to his Creatures; which, if possible, is still further manifest from what precedes it, in the same Chapter. "And I " heard the Number of them which were " sealed; and—of the Tribe of *Judah* were " sealed Twelve thousand; of the Tribe of " *Reuben* were sealed Twelve thousand:" And of every other Tribe, the same Number.

This seems, I think, not so much designed for an *exact Account* of the precise Number to be *saved*, of each of the Twelve Tribes, as to set forth the *Divine Equity and Goodness*. The Reason why the same Number is affixed to every Tribe, *may be* to shew, that *every Man*, of *every Tribe*, had it equally in his Power to obtain Salvation: That God had dealt righteously and impartially with them all. And therefore we *may, nay we must*, infer the same equal and righteous Treatment, in respect to *all the Nations of the Earth*.

It has often grieved me to observe the strange Inattention of *some People* to the glorious Truths of the Gospel, in preferring the *narrow Sense* of a few dubious Scriptures, extorted from the Text, by innumerable *Serpentine Arts of Evasion and Sophistry*; which makes the Go-

\* Rev. vii. 9.

vernment of God a greater and more detestable *Tyranny*, than ever Nation yet groaned under, or was cursed with, in Opposition to a vast Multitude of Scriptures, which bear Testimony, in Conjunction with *Reason's best Dictates*, that a Door of Salvation stands open to all Men. And in Time it will, I doubt not, appear (tho' I cannot keep Pace with these Gentlemen) " That I have never trodden under Foot the Son of God,"\* or counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy Thing; but have, on the contrary, carried my Reverence and Veneration of this *One Offering*, as high as the Nature of those Obligations, we lay under to the eternal and infinite Being, will allow. He is jealous of his Honour; and if we give that to the Son which *belongs only* to the Father, neither the Father nor the Son will be well pleased with us.

I come next to *Remarks*, P. 16. " Our Author thinks to puzzle us with several Questions, about the Infinity of a Satisfaction; as, *Who must make it? To whom must it be made? Must it be by one infinite Person, or rather Being, to himself, or to another infinite Being? &c.* And again, *How can an infinite Being suffer at all?*"

This is but a small Part of what may be found in the *Vindication*. However, be pleased to hear Mr. *Wilson's* Answer, as follows.

" If he cannot, or will not, distinguish between Essence and Personality, in the Deity,

\* *Heb. x. 29.*



“ he ought, however, to allow, that it is  
 “ constantly maintained by us: And we think,  
 “ on a Scripture Foundation. We say not that  
 “ *one Divine Essence* made Satisfaction to *ano-*  
 “ *ther Divine Essence*, but that the Son of  
 “ God, who is always distinguished from the  
 “ Father, made Satisfaction, as the great Me-  
 “ diator: Nor is this, in the least Degree, re-  
 “ pugnant to the Unity of the Divine Na-  
 “ ture. Who says, an infinite Being, as such,  
 “ is the Subject of Suffering? What we af-  
 “ firm is, that *Jesus* our *Emmanuel*, whose  
 “ Glory is infinite, suffered as Man, or in his  
 “ human Nature: And that the Glory of his  
 “ Person rendered his Sufferings infinitely me-  
 “ ritorious, &c.”

I am sorry to see such an *ambiguous*, tho'  
*florid Answer*. Indeed, I suspected it would be  
 exceeding *difficult*, if not *impossible*, to persuade  
 them to speak clearly and intelligibly on this  
 Subject; which they never will do, till the  
 Word *Person* is defined. This Word has al-  
 ways been their dark Hiding-place, and *Den*  
*of Resort*.

There has, since the *Vindication* was pub-  
 lished, a Pamphlet appeared, under the Title of  
*An Enquiry into the Doctrine of the Trinity,*  
*the Mission and Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the*  
*Pre-existence of Souls, and the Resurrection*  
*of the Body:* Which endeavours to settle  
 the *Notion of Personality*. It contains, I con-  
 fess, many very excellent Things; and is, I  
 think, well worthy the Notice of the Pub-

lick:

lick: Yet it is evident, the Author has made a little too free with a Book or two of mine, without ever quoting either. Mr. *Locke*, indeed, is *very fairly* quoted. But is it not hard, the *Rich* and *Great* should be paid their *Dues of Honour* so precisely, while the *poor Man* is robbed with Impunity? It is really *very severe* upon us young Beginners, to have our Shops infested with such *anonymous Petty-larceny Purloiners*, who vend our Goods, as of their own manufacturing, even before our Doors, and under our very Noses. But to return to the *Argument*.

Is any Being infinite but the *Divine Essence*? Has not every *Person* in the Trinity a *Divine Essence*? Is not the Essence of *God* ONE? Are not the *Son* and *Spirit* equal to the *Father*? Can a Person subsist, without an *Essence peculiar* to itself, which constitutes its Personality? If this be the Idea of Person (and let them prove it is not) there must, in *Deity*, be three distinct Essences, as well as Personalities: Or rather, if *each* is divine and infinite, there *must be three Gods*.

If their *Personalities* imply no *Essence peculiar* to such Personality, why is the Person of the *Son* and *Spirit* said to be equal to the *Father*, who is an eternal Essence, or Being? And notwithstanding their Unwillingness to yield up this Doctrine, a clear *Definition of the Word Person* would soon oblige them to it, and establish *poor Muggleton's* Notion of a Trinity of Manifestations.

There



There cannot be any thing *above Manifestation*, in the true Doctrine of a Trinity. More Gods than one *are allowed* to be impossible. And it is, I think, very clear, that between *Manifestation* and the *Divine Essence* there is NO MEDIUM, except that of Person, in the Way I have explained it, to be admitted. Now this Person is *neither* the Godhead, nor a mere Manifestation, but *something between both*, which it is impossible to apply, in support of the common Doctrine of the Trinity.

The Trinity is said to consist of *three Divine Persons* in *one Essence*: But this supposes an *entire Person* to exist without, or at best with but *One-third* of an Essence. How Person can be considered *without Essence*, any more than *without Intelligence*, is not clear to me: And therefore, I *once more* take the Liberty of refreshing their Memories with the Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Let us a little inspect the Scripture, and see whose Opinion it *most favours*, mine of *Manifestations*, or *theirs* of a *Trinity of Persons*. God making different Manifestations of himself to his Creatures, is an *easy* and intelligible Notion, not clogged with the least Absurdity. The three Persons said to be contained in the Trinity, are *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*, tho' in some Places we read, *the Spirit of God*: Yet this, I apprehend (in strict Sense) to be *misapplied*, with respect *to him*; and is an Error, or Defect in Language, occasioned by our Method of Expression, in respect to *our own Spirits*; which,

which, under this Junction, or Union with the Body, may very fitly be expressed under the Phrase, *the Spirit of Man*. But of God, whose Essence is *pure Spirit*, such a Phrase cannot be strictly pertinent. Our Lord, who best understood the Matter, lays it down positively, that *God is a Spirit*.\* Now, I know of no other Spirit than this, which the Bible exhibits to us, under the Notion of a *distinct Divine Person* in the Trinity.

In our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Fulness of the Godhead was said to dwell bodily*; † and that unto him *was given the Spirit without Measure*. || Not to stay now to enquire into the full and precise Meaning of these Expressions, that being reserved for Consideration, under my new Hypothesis, it is plain that *this Spirit* was the *same Spirit* of God, or that God whom our Saviour declares *to be a Spirit*: So that these two Persons of *Father* and *Son* are, I think, at once *shewn* to be only Names for one and the self-same Being. And if God be any where spoken of, under the Character of a Son, it is only a *relative Term*, borrowed from the extraordinary Manifestation of our Lord, and from the Divine Spirit actuating his Person. The same may be said in relation to the *Holy Ghost*, which signifies *Spirit*, and is only another Word for the *eternal Spirit*, or *God*. Our Saviour says to his Disciples, *He* (the Holy Spirit) *that dwelleth with you, shall be in*

\* John iv. 24.

† Col. ii. 9.

|| John iii. 34.

you.



you. \* This could not be true of his *Person*, but of the *Godhead*, or *Divine Spirit* which dwelt in Christ; and which, in the same Chapter, he himself calls the Holy Ghost; which was to be the After-guide of Believers.

Now where was the Difference between the Godhead said to reside in Christ, or the Holy Ghost? *He (that) dwelleth with you shall be in you.* And, ver. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.*

If God be a *simple, pure, and undivided Spirit*; if it was *this Spirit* which created the World, which is said to have *resided* in our Saviour, and which *was promised* and bestowed on Believers, under the *Character* of the Holy Ghost; unless we will have a *Trinity of Gods*, what can be plainer than this, that *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* are *no more than three different Names*, used to express *three different Manifestations*, among which, that of *Son* seems to be *the most remote and incorrect*?

In the next Place, I thought the *Person of Christ* had consisted in the *created intelligent Part*, independent of his Divinity. My Idea of his Person teaches me this, tho' it may not agree with *their Notion* of the second Person in the *Trinity*. And I humbly ask, whether, in the Person of the *Son*, they include *any thing* of the *intelligent and human Part*? Or mean only of his *Divinity*; and consider his Person as it is called the *second Person* in the *Trinity*, a pure and infinite Spirit?

\* St. John xiv. 17.

The *Suffering*, however, Mr. *Wilson* seems to allow was not infinite in itself, " but received " its infinite Worth and Value from the Glory " of Christ's Person." Now, if the Person of Christ, to whom this infinite Glory belongs, and the Humanity of Christ which suffered, be quite different in Nature, how *was it possible* to convey *Infinite* to *Finite*, or to make that *infinite* which in itself is *finite*? Mr. *Wilson* allows, " That Man, absolutely bounded in his " Understanding and Faculties, can have no " Actions that are infinite." And yet here he is teaching the contrary Doctrine, and supposing it possible, for Deity to raise *Finite* to *Infinite*; which I esteem an absolute *Contradiction*, and *entirely out* of the Verge of Omnipotence, as is Transubstantiation itself. And I cannot help concluding, that the chief Reason why *these Protestants* do not receive this *Popish Doctrine*, is not because of its being a *Lye*, and a *Contradiction* to our Reason and Senses, but because *it did not happen to be put into the Assemblies Catechism*. Had those pious and reverend *Fathers* (who compiled it) *adopted* it there, I doubt not but our present Believers would have *swallowed it greedily*; have adored it as a holy Mystery; and been as impatient of Contradiction upon that, as they are *now*, in respect to the Doctrine we are seriously debating.

If the Suffering of Christ acquired its *infinite Merit*, because it was according to the Will of, and accepted by an *infinite Being*,  
H what



what may not be said of the Sufferings of the *Martyrs* and *holy Men* of all Times, who have laid down their Lives in the Cause of Religion and Virtue?—Once more; for I had rather repeat, or diversify, than be too slack here.

There are, they say, three Persons in one Divine Essence. Now, does not the entire Person of the *Father* consist in *Essence* and *Attributes*? If any thing more be required to constitute his PERSONALITY, declare it. But there is not (as I think it is impossible there should be) a few Remarks may deserve our serious Notice. By the Phrase of *God the Father*, nothing more, in Point of *Essence* or *Attributes*, is intended to be set forth to us, than by the single *Term*, or Name, *GOD*. *FATHER* serves only to shew his Relation to the Works of his Hands. Now, these *Attributes* and this *Essence* will, I hope, be allowed to constitute entirely the *Person* of the *Father* and must, consequently, be unalienable from our *Idea* of his Person; but if the Person of the *Son* be entirely distinct from that of the Father, how comes it about, that the same simple *Essence*, and the same *Attributes*, should constitute his Person also? Is this agreeable to the Nature of *Individuation*? or is it even possible? Is the same miraculous Thing true also of the third *Person* in the Trinity, called the *Holy Spirit*? Or have the glorious *Three*, three *Sets* of infinite Attributes? How is it possible to prove three distinct Persons in the Trinity where they all consist of the very same *Essence*

and *Attributes*, without proving as many distinct Persons as you please?

If Person, without Essence and Attributes, belonging to itself only, can mean more than a mere *Name* for nothing, or an indigested Vapour of the Fancy, I am greatly mistaken.

As the Divine Being, his *Essence* and *Attributes* united, is but one indivisible Being, it is as clear (if Person be a Being) as any Demonstration in *Euclid*, that the Doctrine of three Persons, as *now held*, destroys the Unity of the Divine Nature, and is in *itself* a plain Contradiction.

If the same Essence and Attributes, which constitute the *Godhead*, or *Person* of the *Father*, be the very same which constitute the *Godships*, or Divine Persons of the *Son* and *Spirit*, it is a clear Proof, that *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit* (allowing the Divinity of each) are only different Names, arising from different Manifestations of one and the self-same eternal Being. Let my good Friends, the *Trinitarians*, carry it further, if they are able.

It is true, that in Scripture, Attributes and Perfections, the *better* to illustrate their Excellence and Benefit, are sometimes spoke of under the Character of Persons: From whence I believe, many well-meaning People, whose Faith has out-run their Reason, have been led to exalt and worship they know not what; mere Names or Attributes, instead of *Essences* or *Beings*. Wisdom is an Attribute, and



yet in Scripture represented speaking in the Character of a Person: "I Wisdom dwell  
" with Prudence," &c.\*

So, in the *New Testament*, the Spirit of Truth is, in one Place, represented as a Person distinct from Father and Son. "Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak; and he shall shew you Things to come." †

Now, without some other Places to give Light to this, the Phrase would be a little dark and obscure. St. Paul says, "That God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts." And this Spirit of his Son has Relation to *no less* than God the eternal Spirit whose Fullness was said to have *dwelt bodily in Christ*. ‡ The Words then, in the next Verse John xvi. 14. "He shall receive of mine," shew plainly, that it was to be a *Gift*, or *Manifestation* of the same Spirit, who is the Godhead and who dwelt in our Lord, that was to lead the Believers into all Truth. Nor is there any Distinctness of Persons between the Godhead and this Spirit of Truth, further than as we may distinguish between a Ray or Illumination in the Mind of Man proceeding from God and God himself; or, as it is expressed by the Apostle, "The Manifestation of the Spirit given to every Man to profit withal." ||

\* Prov. viii. 12.

† St. John xvi. 13.

‡ Gal. iv.

|| 2 Cor. xii. 7.

And this may, *first*, be said *not to speak of itself*, as it is only a Manifestation of Knowledge and Power, proceeding from the eternal Spirit (and not the whole Essence, which is a Contradiction) in the Soul of Man. And, *2dly*, we are hence to understand, that it is no *Impostor*, *Freak*, or *Whimsy* of the Imagination, but a real Divine Discovery, or Manifestation of the Holy Spirit: So that do but change the Terms, *the Spirit of Truth* to (the Apostle's Language) *a Manifestation of the Holy Spirit*, all Obscurity vanishes; and all Notions drawn from hence, of distinct Persons in the Trinity, will immediately disappear. And permit me to say, it seems inevitable, that these Gentlemen will find themselves obliged to abide by one of the three following Things: *1st*, The Word *Person*, as it relates to the Son and Holy Spirit, must stand for a *mere Non-entity*. Or, *2dly*, It can signify only different Manifestations of one and the same Divine Being. Or, *3dly*, It must signify a Trinity of *Gods*, as well as of *Persons*. I leave them to adjust it to their own Liking; and hope, that as Mr. *Wilson* must allow I have, according to his Desire, *very fully* undertaken the Affirmative of this difficult Question, he will either accede to my Account of it, or be pleased *not* to come behind me in his Diligence to remove my Doubts, and explain the Matter clearly to his own Side.

What Mr. *Wilson* observed, *Remarks*, P. 21. about *a Manifestation taking Flesh*, &c. is very strangely applied to me, who have said no such

*Nonsense,*



*Nonsense*, nor taught any Doctrine *from whence* it can be inferred. But to talk of the Divine Wisdom and Power being *exhibited*, or *manifested*, in the *Person* or *Appearance* of Jesus Christ, in the *Flesh*, is, I think, common Sense. *God manifest in the Flesh*, in this Sense I allow; but that *God* was either absolutely *made* *Flesh*, or suffered *in the least* under *this* *Manifestation*, I deny: And I am sorry to find Mr. *Wilson* overshooting the Mark so *precipitantly*, in a Case to my Detriment.

Remarks, P. 22. he seems inclined to adventure at a Definition of the Word *Person*; and *Personality* is explained into *personal Properties*. But this, with his good *Leave*, does not at all relieve the Difficulty in their Favour, but looks with a *favourable Aspect* towards our Argument. The Word *Person* is still left undefined. Properties are relative to their Subjects in which they *inhere*. And *how* a Person can have Properties peculiar to itself, without having an *Essence* peculiar to itself also, in which these Properties *inhere*, is *hard* to be understood. How this agrees with the *three* Divine Persons having but *one Essence*, and yet differing in their *Properties*, one having what the other has not, requires more Skill in *Metaphysics* than I am Master of, to explain: And he that can make more of *personal Properties* than what belongs to *mere Manifestation* of one and the same Divine Being, is a much wiser Man than I am, or ever expect to be; tho' these strange, ambiguous Answers, so much

beneath

beneath their *Author*, is all I have been able to get to Queries of the most *clear* and *important* Kind.

If Scripture, as they pretend, so fully favours their Doctrine of a Trinity of Persons, it is pity these Gentlemen cannot draw a *clear Definition* from thence. Surely that must be a *weak Cause* indeed, which *Reason* contradicts, and *Scripture* does not support.

Mr. *Wilson's* Innuendo, in Page 23. *about my preferring Mr. Foster to Jesus Christ*, is a little strained and unkind: But if it gives him any Pleasure, I am contented; and can easily bear it: Yet I crave Leave to explain my own Meaning—By an *unbounded Soul* then, I only intended a *Charity to all Men*, not bounded by any of the *narrow Limits* of Sects and Opinions. And as I am persuaded both *Scripture* and *common Speech* will bear me out, in *this Use* of the Phrase, give me Leave, as the most suitable Return I can make for the Favour of this *unthought of Criticism*, to recommend this truly amiable and catholick Temper of Soul, to all those who are by far too narrow and bounded in their Sentiments.

I allow, (*Remarks*, P. 24.) that as God has made a Revelation of his Will, by *Jesus Christ*, it is the Duty of all, in Proportion to their *Opportunity* and *Faculties*, to endeavour to *understand*, and *conform* to this Revelation. How far some who do not *outwardly obey* are culpable, belongs only to the great Judge of the Heart to determine.

I was



I was neither *sneering* nor *indignant* against Mr. *Pickering*, but *serious* and *sincere* in ALL that I said. I am sorry such *unexpected* *Misrepresentations*, or at least *uncandid* *Suspicion* about my Sincerity, should oblige me to these unpleasant (and otherwise unnecessary) *Vindications*. I doubt not in the least, but that both these Reverend Gentlemen heartily and fully believe these Doctrines: But, in the Belief of the Doctrine of the Trinity, Mr. *Pickering* was, if I mistake not, *zealously educated*, and brought it with him into the Church of which he is now a Member. Tho' had he embraced it together with the other Doctrines, *notwithstanding all his shining Talents and great Candour*, it would be no Proof of the Goodness of the Doctrines; or that, when strip'd of their false Coverings and Disguises, they would not appear in a *genuine Glare of Contradiction and Nonsense*. It is certain, we have had many Instances of Men of the greatest Understanding and Integrity, embracing and retaining Sentiments in Religion, *utterly repugnant* to the Dictates of sound Reason. And this, I think, should teach us *two important Lessons*; one of *Charity* to our Neighbour; and the other of *Modesty* in regard to ourselves, and the *absolute Truth* and Certainty of our own Systems in Divinity.

In what manner I have proved, that *being bought with a Price* signifies no more than this,  
 “ That our Obligations to love, honour, and  
 “ obey our Creator, are further enhanced by  
 “ that

“ that amazing Instance of his Love and  
 “ Condescension to Man, the Sending and  
 “ Manifestation of Christ in the Flesh,” &c.  
 (*Vindication*, Page 26.) the Reader is desired  
 to judge.

But now, in the last Place, I am (Page 27.)  
 presented with an *hard Text*, for a Solution:  
 “ Him being delivered by the determined  
 “ Counsel and Foreknowledge of God, ye  
 “ have with wicked Hands crucified and  
 “ slain,” *Acts* ii. 23. That God *determined*  
 to send Christ into the World, for the Good of  
 Mankind, I deny not; but that this Text says  
*one Word* about the Necessity of his Death (on  
 the Principles of these Men) further than that  
 it was the Will of God, to submit his Son to  
 fall a Sacrifice to the *voluntary Wickedness* of the  
*Jews*, I *must* and *do deny*; and put them on  
 proper Proof.

The Wickedness of the *Jews*, here mention-  
 ed, seems rather to be an Argument against,  
 than for Mr. *Wilson*. I allow *moral Agents*  
 and *Axes* to be different. What I complain  
 of is, those Doctrines which, as I think, *sub-*  
*vert this Distinction*. That God may also  
*over-rule bad Men, and their Actions, for good*,  
 I freely allow; but see not the Application, in  
 the Case before us. To *over-rule* is, I think,  
 to *interpose*, to *turn* or *divert* a bad Scheme or  
 Proceeding into something better, if not quite  
 the Reverse. The *Jews* wickedly crucified  
 our Lord: Wherein, I pray, was this Wicked-  
 ness over-ruled, when it was not in the least  
 I inter-



interrupted? The Wickedness of Men, which God *sometimes* over-rules, is an Abuse of their own Liberty, an entire Act of their own, and not a Proceeding *absolutely essential* for the obtaining any grand Scheme of Providence. "God tempteth no Man;"\* and yet my Opponents teach something *beyond* this, *viz.* That God not only tempted the *Jews* to destroy his Son, but sent him into the World for a Purpose, which *could not be accomplished without the Assistance of their wicked Hands.* Now how far it may be possible to state a Case, wherein between the *Wisdom of the Expedient*, and the *Wickedness of the Instrument*, there may be no Contradiction, I shall not now stay to enquire: Yet, it must surely be entertaining Notions very *repugnant* to the Honour and Majesty of Deity, to think that Ends and Purposes of his own, in themselves the *most holy and important*, can stand necessarily connected with wicked Means; Means which would be an eternal Reproach to any temporal Concerns. I think, if we admit it possible for God to accomplish all his Purposes by holy and righteous Measures, such as he hath commanded to his Creatures, it is, on the Rectitude of his Being, a strong *Presumption*, if not *Demonstration*, against our Adversaries Notion of Christ's Death. Is it not unaccountably surprising, that the very Thing, (*viz. Wickedness*) which *he was manifested to destroy*, should be necessary, as a Means to bring

\* *Jam. i. 13.*

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about this Destruction. What is this better than *Casting out Devils by Belzebub the Prince of Devils?*

As to *the Reformers being all to a Man against me*, in the Doctrine of an absolute Atonement, I cannot help, or see why it is produced against me. I am *not entirely singular* in my Sentiment; and as I take this Doctrine to be what wants reforming, I thought it could not be impertinent to mention the Reformation, and the Means by which it can only be advanced in the World. I appeal for Proof to the *Vindication*; and take, for the present, my Leave of Mr. *Wilson*.

I have now something to offer to the Reverend Mr. *Pickering*. I have by me the Substance of several of his Sermons, preached against the *Vindication*: Some things being either the same, or near a-kin to Mr. *Wilson's* Arguments, have received their Answer together with his.

The Sermon I am now about to take under Consideration, was preached *Sunday, October 5.* in the Evening, at *Salter's-Hall*, from the following Words, *Acts xx. 28.* "Take heed  
" therefore unto yourselves, and to all the Flock  
" over which the Holy Ghost has made you  
" Overseers, to feed the Church of God,  
" which he has purchased with his own  
" Blood."

From these Words, Mr. *Pickering* has endeavoured to prove " a God manifest in the  
" Flesh, and purchasing his Church with his



" own Blood." He was pleased to acknowledge it to be, as to the Manner of it, *a Mystery not to be comprehended*; and against those who deny it, to fling in the following *principal Difficulties*. 1<sup>st</sup>, " That we SET ASIDE  
 " the whole Wisdom and Pertinency of the  
 " MOSAIC ŒCONOMY, and several remarkable  
 " able Prophecies, that cannot be applied to  
 " JESUS in a LOWER CHARACTER than  
 " that of a God manifest in the Flesh." 2<sup>dly</sup>,  
 " That the CHARACTER of JESUS CHRIST  
 " his HUMANITY, MODESTY, and INTEGRITY,  
 " GRITY, is not to be accounted for on any  
 " other Doctrine, but that of his DIVINITY  
 " and EQUALITY with the FATHER." 3<sup>dly</sup>,  
 " That the Apostles who conversed with  
 " him, and were afterwards inspired by the  
 " HOLY GHOST, very fully concur with his  
 " Divinity, and the Atonement made by his  
 " Blood, which they assert in the strongest  
 " Terms, and by Words which, if understood  
 " in their plain Sense and Meaning, cannot  
 " taken in any other Sense." 4<sup>thly</sup>, " That  
 " this Doctrine has been received, in a manner  
 " ner UNIVERSALLY, by all the Ages  
 " ANTIQUITY, and the VARIOUS Sorts of  
 " Christians, ONE SECT excepted." And  
 " lastly, " That the Doctrine of an absolute Atonement  
 " ment made for Sin, is not evil in itself,  
 " of pernicious Tendency; but draws after it  
 " where it is rightly understood and regarded  
 " the best and most valuable Consequences.

The

These, I think, were the Substance of the main Points then handled against me.

I would not knowingly misrepresent any Person, much less so candid and ingenious a Gentleman as I have now to do with; yet, as I hope I am *very industrious* to give them Satisfaction, let me offer to *every private Christian*, of the Sentiment I am opposing, a Piece of friendly Advice, which I do not remember to have often, if ever, heard from their own Teachers, *viz.* That (in Obedience to an Apostolick Precept, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good")\* they would read *freely and impartially* those Arguments which, in a *friendly Spirit*, may be *urged publicly* against them: Otherwise all our Care and Industry to furnish them with *new and nobler* Apprehensions of the Doctrines of Christianity, will be absolutely bestowed in vain.

Mr. *Pickering*, if I mistake not, in a former Discourse, seemed to be of Opinion, "That Religious Controversy has been a Means to *widen*, rather than *unite* the Sentiments of Christians." Perhaps it may sometimes have done this; but I beseech him to consider, how *mean and despicable* a Thing is Uniformity of Sentiment, when it is *only the Effect* of Prejudice of Education, or of Ecclesiastical Sway: And also, that *many Persons* have Doubts on their Minds, if not *heterodox Sentiments*, which may remain with, and distract them, even to their dying Day, because the Constitution of

\* 1 *Th. ff.* v. 21.



the Church, or Country they live under, will *not* permit them to exhibit their Thoughts freely to the Publick, whereby a *full Solution* and Ease of Mind might be attained.

But what mighty Harm in different Opinions, so long as Men think in the *best Manner* they are *able*; and do *not think*, or deal *hardly* with each other, on this Account? Here Mr. *Pickering* has taught a noble and excellent Lesson of Charity, *viz.* “To distinguish the Man “ from the *Unbeliever*; and tho’ we *disagree* in “ Sentiment, to be *kind* and *good* Neighbours, “ and not throw a Veil over the amiable Part “ of our Neighbour’s Character, but render to “ Morality its due Honours.” But as Truth is stronger than Error, and has, I hope, the *best Advocates* on its Side, *publick Controversy* should, methinks, be no small *Advantage* to her Cause.

I believe, the chief Thing that has made *Infidels*, and *supported Infidelity*, has been the extravagant Doctrines which *frail*, or *aspiring* Men, have obtruded upon the Church, as the *aweful Mysteries of Christianity*: And for opposing of which, many a pious and brave Man *has shed his Blood*. It has been *Entbusiasm*, *Absurdity*, and *Error*, under the assumed Characters of *Revelation*, *Truth*, and *Mystery*: It has been *false fiery Zeal*, and *Persecution*, in support of these Doctrines; together with the vicious and impious Laws of the chief Actors in these blind and bloody Scenes of *Cruelty* and *Superstition*, that has been the greatest Stumbling-block to Mankind, and given the most

fad,

sad, severe and lasting Stabs, to the Interests and Success of the pure and peaceable Gospel of Christ.

I agree with Mr. *Pickering*, That if the Principles of the *Vindication* be admitted, against the Doctrine of an Atonement, and the Doctrine of a Trinity of Persons, many *extreme Difficulties* will seem immediately to occur; but I can by no Means come into his Sentiment, that in order to avoid these Difficulties he has so fully urged, it is best to admit the Doctrine itself, of a *God manifest in the Flesh, and purchasing his Church with his own Blood*; and so put the Difficulty in quite another Place, viz. our *Inability to perceive, or apprehend the Manner of this great Mystery*.

Did or could I believe it to be a Mystery, and not a Contradiction, I would gladly place the Difficulty here; for I am no Enemy to real Mystery: Yet let the *Letter of Scripture* be ever so full, in Favour of what may be reduced to an *absolute Contradiction*, such Texts must immediately take a lower Meaning; and Reason gives, to the *purest Modesty*, some Freedom, in interpreting such Texts. We are hence (the great Truths of all Natural and Revealed Religion consenting, if not constraining) emboldened to make a free, but candid Interpretation of the *Bible*. And I desire to be allowed no further Liberty with the literal Sense, than is agreeable to these Fundamentals, and the Reason on which we Protestants *reject* the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, in Opposition to



to the 'plain Words of our Saviour, urged by the *Romanists* ; " This is my Body."\* The *Eastern Language*, it is said, was full and pompous, and ran much in the superlative Strain ; and whoever would acquire a proper Meaning of some Passages, must make due Abatements.

I allow, in regard to *our Saviour*, two Natures must, in *some Sense*, be admitted ; otherwise, not only Difficulties, but Contradictions, will necessarily *ensue* ; and it will be impossible to make common Sense of many Passages in the Gospel : For Instance, as Mr. *Pickering* observed, our Saviour, in several Places, *speaks and acts as a God*, without any Acknowledgment of a *Dependence* or *Subordination*, as a *Creature* ; while, in other Places, we find him speaking quite the *contrary*. And as there are such numerous Passages proceeding from the *same Mouth*, standing in such *direct Contrasts* to each other, as not to be possibly true of one single or individual Being, we are necessarily led to this Acknowledgment, that to our Lord *Jesus Christ* there did belong *two Somethings* : † And it is the Design of my new

*Hypothesis*,

\* *St. Mark* xiv. 22.

† It is possible my *Hypothesis* may be rejected by some, who may rather think our Saviour spoke at highest *only* as an Ambassador or Representative of his Father ; and that his Knowledge was *all derived* from above ; and the Power which attended him, in the Working of Miracles, *no more* his own Power than that which wrought the *Miracles* said to be done by the Apostles, which was the Power of God *invisibly exerted*. We do not suppose *St. Peter* was really invested with

a Power

*Hypothesis*, now near at hand to be revealed, to shew *precisely* what these *two* Natures were: If this be pretty clearly set forth, the Doctrine of a *Trinity of Persons*, and of a *God manifest in the Flesh*, and *purchasing his Church with his own Blood*, will be found absurd and impossible, and all Mr. Pickering's Difficulties be easily removed; tho' I have been forced in the preceding Pages to take no small Pains to introduce this *Hypothesis* by entering into the Doctrine of the Trinity, and must for the same Reason say a little more.

The Words of the Text, "Purchasing his Church with his own Blood," &c. cannot possibly be *literally* understood. I believe Mr. Pickering will at once allow, that an infinite and omnipresent Spirit, without *Body, Parts, or Passions*, can have *no* Blood to shed; and also, that what seems to be here stiled *God's own Blood*, is the very same which is elsewhere stiled *the Blood of the Covenant*; to which Expression the Son of God stands closely connected (which at once leads us from an Infinite Being to the Humanity of our Saviour); and that Christ's

a Power to strike *Ananias* and *Sapphira* dead; but that God inspired the Apostle to pronounce Sentence, and he (God) himself immediately executed it. To consider, I say, our Lord in *this Light*, tho' it may seem to fall short of the *plain Import* of *several Prophecies*, many Expressions of *our Saviour*, and the Doctrines of the Apostles, would nevertheless to common Reason be, as I think, infinitely more reconcileable, than our Opponents Doctrine of *Three, Distinct, Divine Persons* in the *Godhead*; and therefore I would at present sooner abide by *this* Notion, than embrace their mysterious and imaginary Apprehensions of what they do not in the least understand.



Blood is; by way of Relationship and Eminence (but not literally) stiled *God's own Blood*.

There were, most certainly, two *distinct* Intelligences some how belonging to Christ, commonly reckon'd a *Divine* and *Human* Nature; *not* absolutely incorporated with each other, or made one Person; their Union could never confound, or destroy, or mix the Essence of each other; *no* Power whatever can make the *Divine* become in the least Degree *Human*, or the *Human* at all become the *Divine*; as they must do, to be made one Person: These are Natures, between which, in this high Sense, there is an Eternal Disunion. Tho' the *Assemblies* Confession of Faith (*Ch.viii. P. 21.*) has here palmed on the Church as great an Impossibility as that before mention'd, in relation to *Fore-Ordination* and *Free-Agency*: It tells us, " That two whole Perfect and Distinct Na-  
" tures, the *Godhead* and the *Manhood*, were  
" inseparably joined together in one Person  
" without *Conversion*, *Composition*, or *Confusion*."

Two Men, placed at an hundred Miles Distance from each other, might as truly be said to meet in the *Mid-way* without Motion, as for this strange *Oneness* to be effected without *Conversion* or *Composition*. It is not only impossible to mix essentially *Finite* and *Infinite* together; but, the *very* Reason why (before the *supposed* Union of the *Divine* with the *Human* Nature) the *Divinity* *did* exist *distinct* from the *Humanity*, was, Because it was " nei-  
" ther converted into, nor compounded with the  
" *Human*."

“ Human.” So that one would think, these *reverend* Fathers were resolved not to be behind hand with the *Romanists*, in the Article of Absurdities ; for these few Words are big with no less than *two* glaring Impossibilities : 1<sup>st</sup>, They assert an Union in itself impossible ; and, 2<sup>dly</sup>, That this Union was effected without those Means (*viz.* Conversion or Composition) by which only it was possible, such a Union could be effected : 'Tis asserting a *Change* without an *Alteration* ; and is as great a Piece of Confusion, as ever blind Bigot obtruded upon the World, in the darkest Ages of *Ignorance*, *Superstition*, and *Idolatry*.

I admit the *Pre-Existence* and *great Dignity* of the *intelligent* Part of our Saviour, his excellent Glory before the World began, and that this Expression, *a Body hast thou prepared me*, is plainly the Declaration of this *intelligent* Part, which was a Spirit, and had Dominion over the Body, to which it was united : This is *one* Nature, and the *other*, entirely distinct from this, was the *very Godhead*, or the *Eternal Spirit*.

My *Hypothesis* then is this : “ That, as contrary Things proceeded out of the same Holy Lips, the *Divine* Being and the *Human*, or rather *intelligent* Part of our Saviour, BOTH SPOKE by the SAME MOUTH, and were therefore not *two* Natures joined in one, but *two* Agents, in themselves intirely distinct, using the same Holy Mouth.”



When the Eternal Spirit actuated the Person of our Lord, it was in some extraordinary Instances perhaps no more than a *mere Machine*, into which Notion all his Expressions, which affirm *absolute Godhead*, must be resolved; as *must* the others, which infer him to be *only a Creature*, into the *created intelligent Part*: Though some Instances of his *extraordinary Knowledge* may, if you please, be resolved into *supernatural Communications* from the *Father* to the *Son*, in the same Manner as the Prophet *Elisba* could tell his Servant *Gebazi* *where he had been*. Some Things there were, which might be resolved into a *delegated Knowledge*; yet there are others, where *absolute Godhead* is affirmed; and *no Denial* of his *Godhead* made, to some who enquired of him concerning it, which, as *Mr. Pickering* observed, *it might be difficult to reconcile with the Humanity, Modesty, and Integrity of our Saviour, if we consider him only as a Prophet*.

Common Prophets, as I apprehend, were *inspired*, and sent on certain Messages, as *free Beings*, who *had it in their Power*, and *sometimes in their Inclinations* too, to act contrary to these Missions; as is manifest from the Instance of *Jonah*, and perhaps some other *Prophets*. But the Case I believe was in many Instances with our Lord quite the reverse,\* and

\* I am not by this intending to make the *Person* of Christ, the *intelligent and human Part*, united in every Instance, or in the main an *intire absolute Machine*. I doubt not but the Commands of the Father were, on the *best and purest Motives*,  
obeyed

the *whole Person* entirely at the Disposal of the Eternal Spirit; though all the Mysteries of his Person, independent of this Observation, become *easy* and plain, upon this *Hypothesis*, which does not consider *two Natures* in *Christ*, but the *Divine* and the *Human* to be as entirely distinct in themselves, as are the *Spirit of God* and the *Mind of Man*, only *these two* distinct Agents using the *same Mouth*. The same Mouth which said *I and my Father are one*, said also, *My Father is greater than I*. Now the Person speaking in the *first*, can never be the same as *spoke* in the *latter*; yet they made use of the *same Mouth*: And this Method of accounting for the Mystery, removes all Difficulties, as to the Manner of “ a God manifest in the Flesh ;” which, as it is so far made plain as not to involve any Contradiction, may readily be admitted, and will, I hope, appear reasonable to the *common Apprehension* of serious Readers, at all tolerably well versed in the Subject.

That Jesus was in some Instances (not only his Mouth, but his whole Person) under the absolute Sway and Dominion of Deity, seems to appear from a very *particular Text* in St. Mark, *Then the Spirit driveth him into the*

obeyed by the *Son*; yet on this *very extraordinary Occasion*, admitting it to be *merely possible* for our Saviour to contradict or deviate greatly in any Thing from the *Commands* of his *Father*, I see no Absurdity in supposing, that to keep *pure* and *inviolable* so *extraordinary a Message*, Omnipotence itself might *sometimes*, though perhaps *very rarely*, be exerted. But this affects not the main Argument.

Wil-



*Wilderness* : \* This looks like arbitrary Actuation and Sway.

The Divine Spirit *spoke and acted sometimes* and *sometimes* the created intelligent Part *spoke, acted, and suffered only* : We have many Instances of both Kinds : Of the latter, among many others, may be reckoned *his Prayer and Agony in the Garden* ; as well as *his Suffering on the Cross* ; unless we would involve *inexplicable Absurdities* : For, as to the *Godhead*, could neither *pray nor suffer*, though at certain Times it might *actuate the Person, and speak through the Mouth*. But how far distant is this from Mr. *Pickering's Doctrines* ! The *Man* indeed did *suffer and die* ; but was the *very God* in the *least Degree* made one with that *Being* who *prayed in the Garden, and suffered on the Cross* ? Will the most *sanguine Trinitarian* presume to say this, That an Almighty and Infinite Being can possibly undergo any Change or suffer the *least Diminution* of his Happiness ? Yet *surely these Words were true, and these Agonies real* : But *who* was it that *uttered the one, and endured the other*, but the created intelligent Part, with the human united ?

*The one ever living and true God it could in no sense be* ; for 'twas to that one supreme Being our *Lord addressed himself* : And what now is become of the *infinite Being*, that was to suffer and satisfy Divine Justice, or of the *Infinity* of the *Satisfaction* ?

\* St. Mark, i. 12.

The Eternal Spirit, by which the *Humanity* was, in many Instances, absolutely governed, was, no doubt, *present* with the Person of Christ, to *succour* and *support* him under all his *Sufferings*, *Temptations*, and *Agonies*. The Necessity of admitting the Truth of *my Hypothesis*, of a *two-fold Agency*, or two distinct Agents, is evident, not only from the foregoing Observations on the Trinity, but will further appear from considering the palpable Absurdities that flow from that Doctrine, which supposes the Person of our Lord to be Divine, and made up of the Divine and Human Nature united: It is plain, that some of the Expressions mentioned above, which *evidently denote* two distinct Agents, must be absolutely false of one of these Agents: What is said which belongs only to the Creature, must be opposite to the Divinity; and what is *claimed* and asserted *as a God*, can never be true of the Creature: And being, as is supposed, both *united into one Person*, our Saviour is made to inculcate and *affirm Contradictions* for Truth.

Can Mr. *Pickering* carry his Ideas of this *venerable Mystery* one Jot beyond this *easy* and *rational* Account of it, without *involving Contradictions*? Why should we pay so awfull a Regard to the *mere Name of Mystery*, as to shut our Eyes, and refuse to see in so *easy* and *obvious a Case*?

The *extraordinary Possessions* of some Persons by *evil Spirits*, of which we read in the *New Testament*, may serve to prove *this Notion* of mine,



mine, not altogether so wild and extravagant as some may imagine. There is Reason to believe, that in *these Possessions* the *evil Spirit* spoke by the *Mouth* of the *Man*. The *Devils* knew our *Saviour*; they trembled, and were, against their Wills, obliged to submit to his Authority: And as they sometimes used the *Mouth* of the Person possessed, at other Times they *closed them up*; and were then called *dumb Devils*: At least we have *one Instance* of this kind, where the *Man* spoke after he was dispossessed of the *Devil*, though he could not utter a Word before; and *why* may not the *Mouth* as well as the *whole Body* be under the immediate *Actuation* and *Sway* of the *supreme Being* for a good Purpose, as of an *evil Spirit* for a bad one? We read, that when certain prophane Persons presumed to call over the Names of *Jesus* and *Paul*, in order to dispossess an *evil Spirit*, the *evil Spirit* answer'd, "*Jesus* I know" and "*Paul* I know, but who are ye?" And immediately the *Man* in whom the *evil Spirit* was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, and they fled out of that House, naked and wounded." If the *evil Spirit* could wield the *whole Body* with such Success against *seven Men*, much more might the *Tongue* be at its Command.

We read, *Luke* xi. 14. that our Lord cast out a *Devil*, and it was dumb. *And it came to pass, when the Devil was gone out, the Dumb spake*. In Possessions, 'tis believed the *Devils*

\* *Acts* xix. 15, 16.

used seldom to be *dumb*; and that when they *did speak*, it was by the *Mouths* of the *Persons* into whom they were enter'd; for had the Speaking of evil Spirits in Men, been only *articulate Sounds formed within*, without the Use of the external Organs of the *Mouth* and *Tongue*, though the Devil might be in *that Sense* dumb, yet the Person possess'd might have the Use of the Organs of Speech. But when we read that the Man *was possessed with a dumb Devil*, and that on his being cast out, the *Dumb spake*; it is plain the evil Spirit had *closed up* the Mouth of the Man, and that 'twas by *the Mouth* the Devils used to speak. The Devil was dumb in respect to the *same Mouth* by which the Man *spoke* after the Devil was expelled: And this proves, that a *human Soul* and an *evil Spirit*, though *distinct Agents*, did nevertheless make use of the *same Organs* of Speech. But (tho' this is so plain) admit nothing of it were proveable from Scripture, I think my Cause *formidable enough*, without the Aid borrowed from hence.

Our Saviour declares, " I have Power to lay down my Life, and to take it up again:" Can this be meant, in any tolerable Sense, of a God dying? I think not, because 'tis a certain Maxim in Philosophy, that nothing can produce nothing: Could you suppose no intelligent Being now to exist, 'twould be absolutely impossible any such Being should ever exist at all. Either every thing must have been eternal, or there must have been from all Eternity one supreme,

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*preme, self-existent Being; from whose Power and Pleasure all the others have derived their Existences: And the latter is, I doubt, not the very Truth of the Case, which I would wish every Man reverently to believe, as I myself very sincerely profess to do.*

How far the intelligent Part of our Saviour was capable of *re-entering* into, and *animating* his Body in the Sepulchre, I cannot say; but from the *New Testament* it seems rather to appear, that our Lord was raised from the Dead by the mighty Power of the Father, or the Divinity exerting itself for the Performance of so stupendous a Miracle.

Mr. Pickering was pleased to call for an *Explanation* of the following Scripture: *John* iii. 13. "And no Man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven." Though it may be hard to explain every Text which Men of Ingenuity may be pleased to point out, yet the great Fundamentals of all natural and revealed Religion, once fixed, no Interpretation can be admitted in Violation of such a sacred Standard. But let me ask Mr. Pickering what was meant by the Son of Man who came down from Heaven? Is it the Humanity? If so, how will this agree with the Scripture, *a Body hast thou prepared me: Or again, how could it be possible for our Saviour's Body to be in two Places at once? What then could that Son of Man be, who was both in Heaven and on Earth at the same Time? Truly nothing less than the*

*Divinity*

*Divinity*, who *fills all Space*, and is here, from his *Actuation* of the *Humanity*, by a *very remote Figure of Speech*, stiled *the Son of Man*. If this be a wrong Explication, I should, in return for my Pains and Sincerity, be glad to see one that is *more clear* and consistent. If indeed *Heaven* be resolved into *State* rather than *Place*, the created intelligent Part might be *intended*; but this I take to be more *forced* and *unnatural* than the other.

Are not we told, that the *Fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ*: Now is this possible (strictly speaking) to be true, that an *infinite and omnipresent Being* can be *any more* contracted to a *certain Spot*, than be annihilated: The *plain Meaning* then must be, that he was *virtually present*, as an *Agent actuating* (tho' distinct from) the *Person* or *Humanity* of our Lord.

Again, How must we interpret a Text in the *Revelations*? “ I am the First and the Last, “ I am he that liveth and was dead.” \* Now will Mr. *Pickering* aver, that God the Infinite Spirit was *really dead*? Is it not rather to be resolved into my *Hypothesis*, or (as observed above) a remote Figure of Speech, arising from the Relation which the Divinity, who never *could die*, was pleased to stand in to the *Humanity* of our Lord, which *did die*.

I observed one Attempt of Mr. *Pickering*, to prove *distinct* Persons in the Trinity, collected from the first Chapter of St. *John*—“ In

\* Rev. i. 17, 18.



“ the Beginning was the Word, and the Word  
 “ was with God, and the Word was God  
 That Cause must surely be very weak, which  
 obliged to have recourse to the *literal* Sense  
 a Text of Scripture, which, should it be ad-  
 mitted, will, at the same time it proves  
 Doctrine, pull down *another*; for if it argues  
 a Distinctness of Persons, it must do the ve-  
 same of Essences: But let us look to the Text  
 itself, and we shall soon find an easy Explica-  
 tion of this mighty *Mystery*. Tho’, as Mr. Pe-  
 kering argues, to BE the Thing, and WITH  
 the Thing, are different, yet this cannot be al-  
 lowed as he takes it, because a Thing which  
 is but one, cannot be ITSELF, and WITH  
 self at the same time; and this apparent Ap-  
 surdity obliges us to look a little further for the  
 Meaning of this Passage: And if, in the Text  
 brought from the *Revelations* above, two Things  
 seem to be affirmed of the *same Being*, which  
 cannot *both be true*, viz. *that he who is called*  
*first*, that is God, *was subjected to Death*; will  
 may not the same Liberty be taken with the  
 of St. John? But further, our Saviour is styled  
 the *Wisdom of God*, and the *Power of God*,  
*whom he made the World*. Now how God  
*Wisdom and Power*, which are *Attributes* im-  
*parable* to his Being, can be stiled a Person  
*distinct from himself*, I leave for wiser Heads  
 than mine to determine; for supposing God  
 could be divested of his Wisdom and Power  
 (which is impossible) and exist without either  
 yet Wisdom and Power are only Attributes

which

which always suppose an Essence to which they belong, but can by no means of themselves constitute a *Personality*. That God's Wisdom and Power were manifested in the *Person* and *Appearance* of our Lord Jesus Christ, is of *easy Apprehension*; but that *mere Wisdom and Power* could take Flesh, does not seem altogether so certain: And the *Attributes of Deity*, the Wisdom and Power of God exerted or put forth into Action, in the stupendous Works of Creation, may, in a very low and comparative Sense be stiled *God, much better* (I think) than it is in our Power to consider or understand this *WORD*, which is here said to have taken Flesh, to be a Person distinct from God's Essence and Attributes, *both taken together*. Let him that disapproves this Explication, shew its Insufficiency by rendering a better.

As Mr. *Pickering* would fain make a Mystery of "a God manifest in the Flesh, purchasing the Church with his Blood," so to support *this Plea* of Mystery, he instanced in the Case of *God's Infinity*; which no Man is able fully to comprehend. But how does this illustrate the Matter, when the Doctrine of "a God shedding his Blood" is, because impossible, a *manifest and palpable Absurdity*, while the same Reason which teaches me *this*, tells me also, that *there is* an eternal and infinite Being; and *also*, that it is impossible I should fully comprehend him. But yet, the mere Supposition, that *no such* Being does exist, is, in *my Notion*, the same Sort of *Contradiction*, which seems



seems to hang on the Doctrine " of a God manifest in the Flesh, purchasing his Church " with his own Blood." This Doctrine, if I mistake not, Mr. *Pickering* is willing to refer the Determination of *to a future Time*, as he is also the other of *Infinity*. Now I am inclined to think, the *former*, as 'tis generally maintained, *instead* of enhancing our Admiration and Devotion hereafter, will appear a *palpable Absurdity*: And the *latter* may not perhaps be so much better comprehended than it is *now* for though our Knowledge may, for aught we know, be increased hereafter, yet, as between Deity, and the *highest* and *happiest* Orders of intelligent Beings, possible to be created, there MUST OF NECESSITY be an *infinite Disparity*, no such Being will, in *any State* at all, be ever able to comprehend Infinity.

And now, if what is advanced concerning the Trinity, or my *Hypothesis* be true, and the Account of this mysterious Matter will bear the Test; it is evident, that *all similar Instances* in the Writings of the Apostles concerning the Blood of God, and distinct Personality of our Saviour, will, and must, immediately resolve themselves into the same Sense and Signification.

And the strongest of the *Old Testament Predictions*, in respect to this Matter, will likewise be subject to the *same Interpretation*: One spoke of a Thing *to come*; the other spoke of it *when past*: And as this Event did really happen, and we have a full Account of it, that

think

think must give us the Meaning both of the Prophets and Apostles.

On the other hand, for I am loth to enlarge unnecessarily, should Mr. *Pickering*, or any other Person (for I love Truth so dearly, that I care not from whom it comes) be able, by sound Reason and fair Argument (by any Method of arguing, which may not be as easily applied in support of *Transubstantiation*) to set my Doctrine and Hypothesis aside, and give me a better in its Room, *I think* I am open to Conviction, and ready to receive the *Truth in the Love of it*: And the *Prophecies* of the Old Testament, and Doctrines of the Apostles in the New, will naturally center in his or their better Sense of the Matter. Till this is done, I must creave *Leave* to think, that the *bloody Sacrifices* both before and *under the Law*, tho' they might be *typical* of our Saviour's laying down his Life, yet could never point at this Event, in *any Sense*, in its *own Nature*, absurd and contradictory.

In like manner (granting the most) what they are pleased to urge, concerning *the universal Profession of this Doctrine*, through all the Ages of Antiquity, will amount to no solid Argument. Truth has an intrinsic *Excellence* and *Beauty*, which looks with *Disdain* on the mere Voice of the Multitude: She is, indeed, charming and attractive in herself, and *delights to dwell with the Sons of Men*; but scorns to pride herself upon that Strength only, to which the most *damnable Heresies* have often  
*fled*



*fled for Refuge; Tradition, Time, and Number.* Mr. *Pickering*, I am sure, has *too much* Knowledge and Candour to insist on this Argument.

I come, in the *last Place*, to consider the Consequences of the Doctrine I have been opposing: Mr. *Pickering* is of Opinion, “*Consequences are good, particularly in two Respects: First, That if God has shewn his Hatred to Sin, in sending so GREAT a Person to atone for it, every true Believer must think of Sin with the greatest Abhorrence. Secondly, If God has forgiven me, who have so GREATLY offended against his Law, how ought I to FORGIVE my Fellow-Creatures, and render them all the Services in my Power.*”

That this is Mr. *Pickering's* Way of Thinking and Behaving, I have not the least Doubt, and next to holding *good Principles*, is the reasoning right from *evil ones*.

It is with great *Reluctance, Humanity, and Tenderness of Spirit*, that I find myself obliged to be, on this Head, *exceeding free*. To reflect on Principles, *because* of the Wickedness of some of their Professors, is, I confess, extremely *weak, base, and fallacious*; but when evil Behaviour seems to be the natural *Fruit* of Principle, the Case is different.

There are many Persons of this Faith, for whom I have a strong personal Regard. I look on both the Reverend Gentlemen, my Opponents, as Men of *irreproachable Piety and Candour*;

*Candour* ; and for these Reasons it was, I *made bold* to select them, in the present Controversy : But they will forgive me when I say, the *Reverse* of *all this* seems to be the genuine *Effect* of their Principle. And therefore, in this respect, I must beg Leave to be *very free*, like a faithful Operator, to make *deep* Incisions, and *probe* to the Bottom, that so I may, if possible, exhibit this Picture in its native Horrors and Terrors ; My Design is their *Good*, and to root for ever out of the World, such *destructive Principles*. Those then, who lead *pure* and *upright* Lives, and have never yet perceived the bad Tendency of their Principles, may (as many pious Persons have done) be taught to behold them in a *new Light*, and, perhaps, bid them an *everlasting* and *indignant* Adieu ; and others, who suffer the Effects of such Doctrines to have *full Sway* in their Actions, may be exposed, as they deserve : And it is charitably hoped, some of them will be alarmed and terrified, at the *Impiety* of their *Principle*.

The *wicked* and *unprofitable* Servant, spoken of in the Parable of the Talents, reasoned *just like* a Man of this Principle : “ I knew thee, “ that thou wast an hard (an arbitrary) Man, “ reaping where thou hast not sown, and “ gathering where thou hast not strewed.” He argued and behaved, as a Man very naturally *might do*, who believed all Things to be fixed, by an *eternal unconditional Decree*. It is observable, however, that tho’ his Faith in  
M God,



God, as a sovereign arbitrary Being, was *truly Orthodox*, yet for Want of good Works " he was bound Hand and Foot, and cast into " utter Darknefs."

I doubt not, but some of the *most pious* Professors of this Doctrine will reap an immortal Harvest of Joy hereafter, because they are *sincere*, and act uprightly: Nor do I question but that they love the Creation of God *unfeignedly*, and make it as happy as is in their Power to do; but they have, no doubt, the Grace of God, which, as it proceeds from the *Fountain* of all Goodness, has its genuine Effects of *Pity, Tendernefs, and Charity*, which, joined to a natural *Openness and Benevolence* of Mind, secretly *counterworks* the Power of their Principle; yet, in the mean time, a meek unprejudiced Heart may as well feel, as unbiased Reason must confess, the Doctrines of these Men to be a cruel Falshood, tho' they may *so far* mistake the Case, as to ascribe the Influence of Grace to *special Election*. On the other hand, a Man, who is impiously disposed to take *Advantage* of these Principles, will, as many of them do, reason and behave in a quite different Manner; and give the greatest Scope and *Licence* to the Passions. A Man that is under a solemn Tie of *Fear and Duty* to his *Creator*, that (because of *Sin here*) dreads his Indignation *hereafter*, has the strongest Motives to *become and continue* a good Man; but he who believes his Behaviour here will have no

Influence

*Influence* on his eternal State hereafter, which he is sure, in his own Mind, will be that of *eternal Life* (having, besides, the same natural Passions and Propensities with others) *cannot* be under the same Tie and *Œconomy* of Piety and Restraint, but may, on his own Principles, *serve God and Mammon*, or rather, be *an Heir of both Kingdoms*.

The great Mr. LOCKE was of Opinion, That *Atheists*, as they cannot give good Security to Government for the Rectitude of their Actions, are hardly worthy of an *equal* and *common Protection* from Government: Yet, I think, he was rather too severe.

*Atheism* is a terrible Principle; and tho' it may be imagined, that some have imbibed and retained it to their *dying Day*, it is yet to be hoped, that Conscience does sometimes read them, in private, an *aweful* and *serious* Lecture, and make them even *shudder* and *tremble*, lest they should *mistake* in the End; and, instead of dropping into a State of *Non-intelligence*, be compelled to render a *strict* Account to an *aweful* and *incensed* Judge, at whose Disposal are the Conditions of all his Creatures. Such an awakening Sentiment as this may be of some Service to Piety and Virtue; whilst, on the other hand, he who is sure that there is a God, and that he is *unalterably* on his Side; that his Sins are washed away in the *Blood of the Lamb*, and Christ his Surety has done all for him without him, and prepared the *Wedding-garment* of his *own Righteousness* to cloath



him withal; what mighty Obligations can such a Man be under, to lead a Life of Piety and Holiness, with a View to please his Creator, when neither his *bad* Deeds can make him *more hateful* in God's Sight, or his good ones *more acceptable*? It is in Christ *only*, that God is well pleased; and he that thinks *good Works* will prove an *Increase* of the Divine Favour, is undervaluing and affronting the Merits of a crucified Saviour (upon whom alone we are taught all must be placed) and *does not understand how to take due Advantage* of the Doctrine of Election.

Upon this Principle, then, Man may securely take an *uncontrouled Swing* in the Gratification of every darling Lust and Passion. He that knows his Election to be *unconditional*, may very naturally despise all Conditions. *Human Policy*, indeed, may prompt some Men of these Principles to *act well*, for their own *Interest* and Reputation: But has not an *Atheist* as good Right to this Plea? and may he not be supposed as *careful* to reap the *same Advantages* from its Influence? There is one *little Difficulty*, which these Gentlemen do not seem ever to have fully surmounted; and that is, if the Blood of Christ has absolutely done the whole for them, *what Sense or Benefit can there be in a Mediator*? This, tho' it pass for a *Mystery* with them, *common Reason* has another Name for. On our Principle, indeed, which considers the *whole Economy* of Man's Salvation as conditional, the Office of a Mediator

is a Doctrine of *great Benefit* and Importance.  
 I could be glad, that all who profess their  
*Faith*, were *righteously simple*, and did not be-  
 hold the natural Tendency of their Principle,  
 or take *Licence* from it; yet I have seen, with  
 Regret, *some Persons*, who have understood  
 and practised this *Art*, in its highest Perfec-  
 tion: And such *Fraud*, *Formality*, and *Hypo-*  
*crisy*, as I have *seen*, and *found*, in some Per-  
 sons rigid in their Faith, has *far out-weighed* the  
 Iniquity of their *bad Neighbours*, who have had  
 the Misfortune to be sometimes under the Re-  
 straints of Conscience, and the Fear of God:  
 And yet these *worst of Wretches* depend entirely  
 on *Christ's Merits*, and *profane* his holy Name  
 with their Mouths, *Morning*, *Noon*, and *Even-*  
*ing*. Indeed, they have, and are resolved to  
 have, *no Merits of their own*: But in what sort  
 of Reverence does that Man hold the *Blood* of  
 Jesus, who will apply it to them for Salvation?  
 For my Part, I think the *least Drop of it* by  
 far too precious, to be lavished away on such  
 Wretches as these. It is well, if *hereafter*,  
 when they may be *vainly expecting* to be  
 waisted by Angels to the Possession of a never-  
 fading Crown, they may not (when *Death un-*  
*draws the Curtain*) find a quite different Per-  
 sonage in Waiting, invested with *full Power*  
 and Resolution to bear them Company, and  
 conduct them to a *more suitable Habitation*.  
 I had once the Opportunity to spend an Even-  
 ing with a *Gentleman of this Principle*, who  
 spoke



spoke and reasoned very freely on this Subject. One Thing he imparted to me, which I shall not *hastily* forget, viz. *that the eternal State of all Mankind were pre-determined, or decreed from all Eternity; that God, for the sake of the Merits of his Son, and in virtue of a certain Covenant, would bring the Elect safe to Glory, where their Happiness should be every Moment increasing; the Damned on the contrary, being bound under Chains of everlasting Darkness and Perdition, would not only, in spite of all their best Endeavours to be virtuous, be cast into the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone, but that (the merciful) God would be every Moment continually, throughout the endless Ages of Eternity, increasing and aggravating their Torments.*

These were the Sentiments of a *sound Electionist*, freely express'd; and they are to be sure natural enough, on such Principles of *absolute Sovereignty*, as some of them hold. Here Language *must fail* of Description, and 'tis out of the Power of Words to paint such a Doctrine fully in its *genuine Horrors* and Terrors. There cannot surely be any thing *base, wicked, or detestable* in Hell, or upon Earth, which such a *blest Principle* as this is not capable of achieving: Certainly the Sentence of *Go ye Cursed,* must be infinitely more suitable to such *blasphemous abandoned Wretches*, than to *Infants not a Span long*; which some of the Men, zealous for *Election*, will tell you, *are now broiling in Hell-Flames.* And he, who can believe the

Deity

Deity capable to deal after this *cruel* and *tyrannical* Manner, with innocent Creatures, of *intense* and *delicate* Sensations, can never, as Opportunity offers, be supposed backward in the *Cause of Persecution*; all they can do, being nothing in comparison to what they believe and affirm God to be continually engaged in: And what can be more reasonable than a *zealous Imitation* of the Sovereign Lord of all, whose *Favourites*, these (at best) poor *deluded Creatures* fondly imagine themselves, against all *Reason, Piety, and common Sense*, to be?

I have allowed, and I again confess the same, that many Persons, who hold the Doctrine of Election, &c. are of unblemish'd Piety and Morals; but then it arises from other kind concurring Causes; and I fear it might, on Trial, appear, that even the *best of them do not rightly know what Spirit they are of*.

Their Doctrines indeed have *never* yet had so much Power as might be *pleasing to some*: 'Tis not very long since they *were coined*; and yet they have tasted too of Power sufficient, to shew the World that I have not been translating or misrepresenting, but *shewing* the natural Tendency of their Doctrines. A little historical Account may perhaps be *very acceptable* to some Readers.

The Men of this Principle were oppressed, in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, and in the Time of *Charles I.* also, in whose Reign some of them, not liking to endure Hardships or Persecutions here, fled away abroad into *New England*;



land; while in the mean time, or soon after Affairs in *England* took a turn in their Favour their Principles seemed to be ascending the Scale of *temporal Power*, and a Synod sat at *Westminster*, where the *Assemblies Catechism* was compiled, and received the Sanction of the *Ministers*. How did the Men of *Election* rejoice in this blessed Opportunity of promulgating their Faith; with what Zeal and Earnestness of Soul did they *address* the Men then in *Power*, *utterly to extirpate Heresy*; to give no Licence or Encouragement to *heterodox* Sentiments! 'Tis well known to those who are conversed in the History of those Times, though the Power of the Independency was but young (and 'twas well for *England* it expired in its Cradle) what Attempts there were made to suppress *Liberty*, what *rigid Instruments* drawn up, Instruments that made it Banishment, not Death, to "deny the Doctrines of the Trinity, Original Sin," &c. And where, think you, had they continued much longer in Power would this *rigid Spirit* have extended its Ordinances? It might have been made Criminal to have at any Time been absent from the publick *Worship*, or to have taken an innocent Tour into the Fields, for fresh Air and Health on a *Sunday*. 'Tis certain there are some Persons so amazingly attach'd to the mere Ceremony of a Sabbath, as to scruple exchanging on that Day a single Word about Temporals; but put them a Visit on a *Monday Morning*, and perhaps you will find them full as *wise, keen, and dextrous*

ctious in their Generation, as ever were the  
 children of this *unsanctified World*. But to re-  
 turn; while this People of God were thus  
 employed at home, their Brethren, who had  
 abroad, were not idle and inactive in their  
 nations: A new *Heresy*, which had first sprung  
 in *Old England*, and was then nick-named,  
 and is now known by the Term of *Quakerism*,  
 read itself by Degrees far and wide, till  
 me of its *Teachers* and *Professors* happened,  
 the Course of their *Zeal* and *Travels*, to  
 ke *New England* in their Way; where, find-  
 g the *Independency* in *full Power*, and be-  
 eving their *Doctrines* of Religion\* to be in  
 themselves *evil* and *beterodox*, they preached to  
 em, boldly, the *gracious* and *free Gospel* of  
 brist; but what they suffered for this would  
 y, and perhaps *has filled Volumes*. Cruel  
 Whippings and Imprisonments were their first  
 Methods used to suppress this *Heresy*; next  
 ame *Cutting off of Ears*; then I think *Con-*  
*secration of Goods*, and *Banishment upon Pain of*  
*Death*, should they return: But as nothing  
 ould stop the *Torrent of Zeal*, which then  
 iminated the *Quakers*, *Death* to them, when  
 ompared with the *Discharge of their Duty*, and  
 ward *Peace of Mind*, was nothing at all;  
 nd they returned again, notwithstanding that  
 cruel Law of *Banishment*, and its grim Ap-  
 endage; and *Death* accordingly became their  
 lot: And in such a manner did these Heroes

\* The *Quakers* had many of them been of the same Prin-  
 ple, before they embraced *Quakerism*.



quit the Stage of Mortality, that 'twas hard to ascertain which exceeded; the *harden'd* and *bellish Cruelty* of these Persecutors, or the *Quakers* Courage, Meekness, and Constancy, in yielding up their Lives. *Four* were in fact put to death by the *common Hangman*; many more either under, or expecting to receive the *same Sentence*. Here, or about this Crisis, the Restoration in *England* happily interfered. King *Charles II.* a Prince of a mild Disposition, was speedily and earnestly applied to, and he immediately put a Stop to their Progress. Their Behaviour was more like an Irruption of Demons from the bottomless Pit, to ravage the Creation, than the meek and gentle Proceedings of the *chosen Children* of the Prince of Love and Peace. However, though no Power on Earth interfered to call them to an Account, the *Divine Vengeance*, if History says true, fell on *many, or most* of these *bloody Persecutors*, in a most *amazing and terrible Manner*.

These have hitherto been the Fruits of their Doctrines, when in Power; and will, its to be feared, be the *natural, if not inevitable* Result of such Principles; exalted into the Seat of *worldly Sovereignty*. And here, though I *sincerely* rejoice that 'tis in my Power to CONGRATULATE my Friends of *this Principle*, upon the Religious Liberty, which they in common with others enjoy, under this mild and glorious Administration of civil Government; yet I humbly hope the ever kind and watchful Providence of the Almighty will so far graciously

super

erintend temporal Affairs for our Good, as  
 keep for ever Principles, that lead to *Perse-*  
*ion, far away from the Throne.*

To conclude, Tho' it is possible some may  
 too much incensed, resolved, and obstinate,  
 give me a *candid Hearing*, yet I intreat them,  
 Love, to sift, inspect, and re-examine their  
 arter afresh; for tho', as it gives Preference  
 them, and establishes their Happiness in an  
 rnal, *unalterable Decree*, sealed with the  
 ood of Jesus, they may be backward to *part*  
 th it, yet it is possible, they have *all along*  
 mistaken a *Counterfeit* for the Great Seal of  
 eaven, and that Christ's Blood was shed for  
 quite different Purpose, the Salvation of all  
 en.

Many who had received their Education  
 among them, and embraced their usual *absolute*  
*Assurance* of Happiness, have afterwards for-  
 ken and condemned the Doctrine; while  
 others, who have led a wicked and dissolute  
 life, have been too sure of their Seal of Salvation:  
 that neither is their boasted Pledge, or in-  
 ward Assurance, to be safely relied on, or  
 Wickedness to be deemed a bad, or mortal  
 symptom: He that has Grace may fall away,  
 and he who has it not, but believes fully the  
 doctrine, need be in no Concern about him-  
 self, but take the utmost Swing and Latitude  
 in all his Actions, being fully persuaded that  
 God can as effectually call him in at the  
*eleventh* as at the *First Hour* of the Day. If  
 Infants born of Elect Parents were to be



exchanged for ten *Mahometan* Babes, the former, I suppose, would make faithful *Muslim* men, and the other, the chosen Seed of the Lord: So that, it is probable, their inward Assurance of Election is much more indebted to the early Impressions of Education, than to the Divine Decree. We are told, the Divine Law once broke, Divine Justice is not obliged to extend a Pardon to any single Soul: But, I fear these Gentlemen forget there is appertaining to Deity, a certain Thing called Mercy, altogether as essential to his Nature and Being as Justice itself. And as a Person offending against the Divine Law is an Object of Punishment, unless he repent and amend, so (in many Instances) if he does repent and amend, he becomes then as much an Object of the Divine Mercy as he was before of the Divine Displeasure: And such is the Rectitude of the Divine Being, that Mercy as well as Justice will have its Way, where the Objects suiting that blessed Attribute present themselves. God is as appeasable as we can expect him to be, if he receives his Creatures to fresh Favour, on the Terms of Repentance and Amendment, without saving any one arbitrarily, while this gives Licence to Sin; so, on the other hand, to turn a deaf Ear to the Cries, or even the Case of the Afflicted, in the same Situation by Nature, those who are saved arbitrarily, looks with a very ill and black Aspect upon Mr. *Wilson's* Doctrine of the Appeasableness of the Deity.

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However, if the Truth is with *them*, I desire earnestly to *perceive* and *embrace* it; but if, on the contrary, she is pleased to smile on my *endeavours*, in support of her Cause; if I have even succeeded so far, as to cause some to *suspect* they are in the wrong, let them follow the *search* with an *unrestrained Ardour*, becoming the great Importance of the Enquiry; and let neither Power nor Policy deter them from this Duty. I assure them, that to their *highest Benefit* my future *best Services*, in this Way, shall always be *humbly* and *cheerfully* devoted.

## F I N I S.

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## E R R A T A:

Page 2. line 17. for *contradicting*, read *contradicting it*.  
 Page 22. line 32. for *are*, read *and*. Page 57. line 6. leave  
 out *as*; line 8. for *so on the other hand*, read *because*. Page  
 4. for *or*, read *and*.



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